Ancient Christian Texts

Commentary on John

Cyril of Alexandria

Volume 2

translated by
David R. Maxwell
edited by
Joel C. Elowsky

series editors
Thomas C. Oden
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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Ancient Christian Texts (hereafter ACT) presents the full text of ancient Christian commentaries on Scripture that have remained so unnoticed that they have not yet been translated into English.

The patristic period (A.D. 95–750) is the time of the fathers of the church, when the exegesis of Scripture texts was in its primitive formation. This period spans from Clement of Rome to John of Damascus, embracing seven centuries of biblical interpretation, from the end of the New Testament to the mid-eighth century, including the Venerable Bede.

This series extends but does not reduplicate texts of the Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture (ACCS). It presents full-length translations of texts that appear only as brief extracts in the ACCS. The ACCS began years ago authorizing full-length translations of key patristic texts on Scripture in order to provide fresh sources of valuable commentary that previously were not available in English. It is from these translations that the ACT series has emerged.

A multiyear project such as this requires a well-defined objective. The task is straightforward: *to introduce full-length translations of key texts of early Christian teaching, homilies and commentaries on a particular book of Scripture.* These are seminal documents that have decisively shaped the entire subsequent history of biblical exegesis, but in our time have been largely ignored.

To carry out this mission each volume of the Ancient Christian Texts series has four aspirations:

1. To show the approach of one of the early Christian writers in dealing with the problems of understanding, reading and conveying the meaning of a particular book of Scripture.

2. To make more fully available the whole argument of the ancient Christian interpreter of Scripture to all who wish to think with the early church about a particular canonical text.

3. To broaden the base of the biblical studies, Christian teaching and preaching to include classical Christian exegesis.

4. To stimulate Christian historical, biblical, theological and pastoral scholarship toward deeper inquiry into early classic practitioners of scriptural interpretation.

For Whom Is This Series Designed?

We have selected and translated these texts primarily for general and nonprofessional use by an audience of persons who study the Bible regularly.

In varied cultural settings around the world, contemporary readers are asking how they might grasp the meaning of sacred texts under the instruction of the great minds of the ancient church. They often study books of the Bible verse by verse, book by book, in groups and workshops, sometimes with a modern commentary in hand. But many who study the Bible intensively hunger to have available as well the thoughts of a reliable classic Christian commentator on this same text. This series will give the modern commentators a classical text for comparison and amplification. Readers will judge for themselves as to how valuable or complementary are their insights and guidance.

The classic texts we are translating were originally written for anyone (lay or clergy, believers or seekers) who wished to reflect and meditate with the great minds of the early church. They sought to illuminate the plain sense, theological wisdom, and moral and spiritual meaning of an individual book of Scripture. They were not written for an academic audience, but for a community of faith shaped by the sacred text.

Yet in serving this general audience, the editors remain determined not to neglect the rigorous requirements and needs of academic readers who until recently have had few full translations available to them in the history of exegesis. So this series is designed also to serve public libraries, universities, academic classes, homiletic preparation and historical interests worldwide in Christian scholarship and interpretation.

Hence our expected audience is not limited to the highly technical and specialized scholarly field of patristic studies, with its strong bent toward detailed word studies and explorations of cultural contexts. Though all of our editors and translators are patristic and linguistic scholars, they also are scholars who search for the meanings and implications of the texts. The audience is not primarily the university scholar concentrating on the study of the history of the transmission of the text or those with highly focused interests in textual morphology or historical-critical issues. If we succeed in serving our wider readers practically and well, we hope to serve as well college and seminary courses in Bible, church history, historical theology, hermeneutics and homiletics. These texts have not until now been available to these classes.

Readiness for Classic Spiritual Formation

Today global Christians are being steadily drawn toward these biblical and patristic sources for daily meditation and spiritual formation. They are on the outlook for primary classic sources of spiritual formation and biblical interpretation, presented in accessible form and grounded in reliable scholarship.

These crucial texts have had an extended epoch of sustained influence on Scripture interpretation, but virtually no influence in the modern period. They also deserve a hearing

among modern readers and scholars. There is a growing awareness of the speculative excesses and spiritual and homiletic limitations of much post-Enlightenment criticism. Meanwhile the motifs, methods and approaches of ancient exegetes have remained unfamiliar not only to historians but to otherwise highly literate biblical scholars, trained exhaustively in the methods of historical and scientific criticism.

It is ironic that our times, which claim to be so fully furnished with historical insight and research methods, have neglected these texts more than scholars in previous centuries who could read them in their original languages.

This series provides indisputable evidence of the modern neglect of classic Christian exegesis: it remains a fact that extensive and once authoritative classic commentaries on Scripture still remain untranslated into any modern language. Even in China such a high level of neglect has not befallen classic Buddhist, Taoist and Confucian commentaries.

Ecumenical Scholarship

This series, like its two companion series, the ACCS and Ancient Christian Doctrine (ACD), is an expression of unceasing ecumenical efforts that have enjoyed the wide cooperation of distinguished scholars of many differing academic communities. Under this classic textual umbrella, it has brought together in common spirit Christians who have long distanced themselves from each other by competing church memories. But all of these traditions have an equal right to appeal to the early history of Christian exegesis. All of these traditions can, without a sacrifice of principle or intellect, come together to study texts common to them all. This is its ecumenical significance.

This series of translations is respectful of a distinctively theological reading of Scripture that cannot be reduced to historical, philosophical, scientific, or sociological insights or methods alone. It takes seriously the venerable tradition of ecumenical reflection concerning the premises of revelation, providence, apostolicity, canon and consensuality. A high respect is here granted, despite modern assumptions, to uniquely Christian theological forms of reasoning, such as classical consensual christological and triune reasoning, as distinguishing premises of classic Christian textual interpretation. These cannot be acquired by empirical methods alone. This approach does not pit theology against critical theory; instead, it incorporates critical historical methods and brings them into coordinate accountability within its larger purpose of listening to Scripture.

The internationally diverse character of our editors and translators corresponds with the global range of our audience, which bridges many major communions of Christianity. We have sought to bring together a distinguished international network of Protestant, Catholic and Orthodox scholars, editors and translators of the highest quality and reputation to accomplish this design.

But why just now at this historical moment is this need for patristic wisdom felt par-

ticularly by so many readers of Scripture? Part of the reason is that these readers have been longer deprived of significant contact with many of these vital sources of classic Christian exegesis.

The Ancient Commentary Tradition

This series focuses on texts that comment on Scripture and teach its meaning. We define a commentary in its plain-sense definition as a series of illustrative or explanatory notes on any work of enduring significance. The word *commentary* is an Anglicized form of the Latin *commentarius* (or "annotation" or "memoranda" on a subject, text or series of events). In its theological meaning it is a work that explains, analyzes or expounds a biblical book or portion of Scripture. Tertullian, Origen, John Chrysostom, Jerome, Augustine and Clement of Alexandria all revealed their familiarity with both the secular and religious commentators available to them as they unpacked the meanings of the sacred text at hand.

The commentary in ancient times typically began with a general introduction covering such questions as authorship, date, purpose and audience. It commented as needed on grammatical or lexical problems in the text and provided explanations of difficulties in the text. It typically moved verse by verse through a Scripture text, seeking to make its meaning clear and its import understood.

The general Western literary genre of commentary has been definitively shaped by the history of early Christian commentaries on Scripture. It is from Origen, Hilary, the *Opus imperfectum in Matthaeum*, John Chrysostom and Cyril of Alexandria that we learn what a commentary is—far more so than in the case of classic medical, philosophical or poetic commentaries. It leaves too much unsaid simply to assume that the Christian biblical commentary took a previously extant literary genre and reshaped it for Christian texts. Rather it is more accurate to say that *the Western literary genre of the commentary (and especially the biblical commentary) has patristic commentaries as its decisive pattern and prototype.*

It is only in the last two centuries, since the development of modern historicist methods of criticism, that modern writers have sought more strictly to delimit the definition of a commentary so as to include only certain limited interests focusing largely on historical-critical method, philological and grammatical observations, literary analysis, and socio-political or economic circumstances impinging on the text. While respecting all these approaches, the ACT editors do not hesitate to use the classic word *commentary* to define more broadly the genre of this series. These are commentaries in their classic sense.

The ACT editors freely take the assumption that the Christian canon is to be respected as the church's sacred text. The reading and preaching of Scripture are vital to religious life. The central hope of this endeavor is that it might contribute in some small way to the revitalization of religious faith and community through a renewed discovery of the earliest readings of the church's Scriptures.

An Appeal to Allow the Text to Speak for Itself

This prompts two appeals:

1. For those who begin by assuming as normative for a commentary only the norms considered typical for modern expressions of what a commentary is, we ask: Please allow the ancient commentators to define *commentarius* according to their own lights. Those who assume the preemptive authority and truthfulness of modern critical methods alone will always tend to view the classic Christian exegetes as dated, quaint, premodern, hence inadequate, and in some instances comic or even mean-spirited, prejudiced, unjust and oppressive. So in the interest of hermeneutical fairness, it is recommended that the modern reader not impose upon ancient Christian exegetes modern assumptions about valid readings of Scripture. The ancient Christian writers constantly challenge these unspoken, hidden and indeed often camouflaged assumptions that have become commonplace in our time.

We leave it to others to discuss the merits of ancient versus modern methods of exegesis. But even this cannot be done honestly without a serious examination of the texts of ancient exegesis. Ancient commentaries may be disqualified as commentaries by modern standards. But they remain commentaries by the standards of those who anteceded and formed the basis of the modern commentary.

The attempt to read a Scripture text while ruling out all theological and moral assumptions—as well as ecclesial, sacramental and dogmatic assumptions that have prevailed generally in the community of faith out of which it emerged—is a very thin enterprise indeed. Those who tendentiously may read a single page of patristic exegesis, gasp and toss it away because it does not conform adequately to the canons of modern exegesis and historicist commentary are surely not exhibiting a valid model for critical inquiry today.

2. In ancient Christian exegesis, chains of biblical references were often very important in thinking about the text in relation to the whole testimony of sacred Scripture, by the analogy of faith, comparing text with text, on the premise that *scripturam ex scriptura explicandam esse*. When ancient exegesis weaves many Scripture texts together, it does not limit its focus to a single text as much modern exegesis prefers, but constantly relates them to other texts, by analogy, intensively using typological reasoning, as did the rabbinic tradition.

Since the principle prevails in ancient Christian exegesis that each text is illumined by other texts and by the whole narrative of the history of revelation, we find in patristic comments on a given text many other subtexts interwoven in order to illumine that text. In these ways the models of exegesis often do not correspond with modern commentary assumptions, which tend to resist or rule out chains of scriptural reference. We implore the reader not to force the assumptions of twentieth-century hermeneutics upon the ancient Christian writers, who themselves knew nothing of what we now call hermeneutics.

The Complementarity of Research Methods in this Series

The Ancient Christian Texts series will employ several interrelated methods of research, which the editors and translators seek to bring together in a working integration. Principal among these methods are the following:

1. The editors, translators and annotators will bring to bear the best resources of *textual criticism* in preparation for their volumes. This series is not intended to produce a new critical edition of the original-language text. The best urtext in the original language will be used. Significant variants in the earliest manuscript sources of the text may be commented upon as needed in the annotations. But it will be assumed that the editors and translators will be familiar with the textual ambiguities of a particular text and be able to state their conclusions about significant differences among scholars. Since we are working with ancient texts that have, in some cases, problematic or ambiguous passages, we are obliged to employ all methods of historical, philological and textual inquiry appropriate to the study of ancient texts. To that end, we will appeal to the most reliable text-critical scholarship of both biblical and patristic studies. We will assume that our editors and translators have reviewed the international literature of textual critics regarding their text so as to provide the reader with a translation of the most authoritative and reliable form of the ancient text. We will leave it to the volume editors and translators, under the supervision of the general editors, to make these assessments. This will include the challenge of considering which variants within the biblical text itself might impinge upon the patristic text, and which forms or stemma of the biblical text the patristic writer was employing. The annotator will supply explanatory footnotes where these textual challenges may raise potential confusions for the reader.

2. Our editors and translators will seek to understand the *historical context* (including socioeconomic, political and psychological aspects as needed) of the text. These understandings are often vital to right discernment of the writer's intention. Yet we do not see our primary mission as that of discussing in detail these contexts. They are to be factored into the translation and commented on as needed in the annotations, but are not to become the primary focus of this series. Our central interest is less in the social location of the text or the philological history of particular words than in authorial intent and accurate translation. Assuming a proper social-historical contextualization of the text, the main focus of this series will be upon a dispassionate and fair translation and analysis of the text itself.

3. The main task is to set forth the meaning of the biblical text itself as understood by the patristic writer. The intention of our volume editors and translators is to help the reader see clearly into the meanings which patristic commentators have discovered in the biblical text. *Exegesis* in its classic sense implies an effort to explain, interpret and comment upon a text, its meaning, its sources and its connections with other texts. It implies

a close reading of the text, utilizing whatever linguistic, historical, literary or theological resources are available to explain the text. It is contrasted with *eisegesis*, which implies that interpreters have imposed their own personal opinions or assumptions upon the text. The patristic writers actively practiced intratextual exegesis, which seeks to define and identify the exact wording of the text, its grammatical structure and the interconnectedness of its parts. They also practiced extratextual exegesis, seeking to discern the geographical, historical or cultural context in which the text was written. Our editors and annotators will also be attentive as needed to the ways in which the ancient Christian writer described his own interpreting process or hermeneutic assumptions.

4. The underlying philosophy of translation that we employ in this series is, like the Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture, termed *dynamic equivalency*. We wish to avoid the pitfalls of either too loose a paraphrase or too rigid a literal translation. We seek language that is literary but not purely literal. Whenever possible we have opted for the metaphors and terms that are normally in use in everyday English-speaking culture. Our purpose is to allow the ancient Christian writers to speak for themselves to ordinary readers in the present generation. We want to make it easier for the Bible reader to gain ready access to the deepest reflection of the ancient Christian community of faith on a particular book of Scripture. We seek a thought-for-thought translation rather than a formal equivalence or word-for-word style. This requires the words to be first translated accurately and then rendered in understandable idiom. We seek to present the same thoughts, feelings, connotations and effects of the original text in everyday English language. We have used vocabulary and language structures commonly used by the average person. We do not leave the quality of translation only to the primary translator, but pass it through several levels of editorial review before confirming it.

The Function of the ACT Introductions, Annotations and Translations

In writing the introduction for a particular volume of the ACT series, the translator or volume editor will discuss, where possible, the opinion of the writer regarding authorship of the text, the importance of the biblical book for other patristic interpreters, the availability or paucity of patristic comment, any salient points of debate between the Fathers, and any special challenges involved in translating and editing the particular volume. The introduction affords the opportunity to frame the entire commentary in a manner that will help the general reader understand the nature and significance of patristic comment on the biblical text under consideration and to help readers find their critical bearings so as to read and use the commentary in an informed way.

The footnotes will assist the reader with obscurities and potential confusions. In the annotations the volume editors have identified Scripture allusions and historical references embedded within the texts. Their purpose is to help the reader move easily from passage to passage without losing a sense of the whole.

The ACT general editors seek to be circumspect and meticulous in commissioning volume editors and translators. We strive for a high level of consistency and literary quality throughout the course of this series. We have sought out as volume editors and translators those patristic and biblical scholars who are thoroughly familiar with their original language sources, who are informed historically, and who are sympathetic to the needs of ordinary nonprofessional readers who may not have professional language skills.

Thomas C. Oden and Gerald L. Bray, Series Editors

TRANSLATOR'S INTRODUCTION

Cyril of Alexandria's *Commentary on John* is an indispensable resource for understanding how Cyril read the Bible. Modern studies of Cyril often pass over this aspect of his thought because he is primarily known for his Christology. The *Commentary on John*, however, provides a window to his thought processes as he grapples with the Scriptures on any number of issues. This commentary, perhaps more than any of Cyril's other exegetical works, puts on full display the chief feature of Cyril's brilliance: a breathtaking mastery of the contents of the Bible.

Biography

Our knowledge of Cyril's early life is sparse and comes to us from writers who lived two centuries or more after Cyril. The church historian Socrates was a contemporary of Cyril, but he describes only Cyril's later career. For his early life, we must turn to John of Nikiu, a seventh-century Coptic bishop and historian, who reports that Cyril was born to Christian parents in northern Egypt, in the town of Mahallê,[1] probably near or identical with the village of Mehallet el-Kobra.[2] The date of Cyril's birth is uncertain, but John McGuckin posits 378 as an approximation.[3]

Cyril became the attendant of his uncle Theophilus, the patriarch of Alexandria, and was ordained lector in the church of Alexandria. Theophilus also took charge of Cyril's education. The *History of the Patriarchs*, composed by Severus, the tenth-century bishop of El-Ashmunien, reports that Theophilus sent Cyril to a monastery on the mount of Nitria in the desert of Saint Macarius for five years.[4] There, Severus relates, he engaged in intense study of the Scriptures, aided by a photographic memory.[5] He is said to have

[1]John, bishop of Nikiu, *The Chronicle of John (c. 690 A.D.) Coptic Bishop of Nikiu: Being a History of Egypt Before and During the Arab Conquest*, trans. Robert Henry Charles (London, 1916; reprint ed., Amsterdam: Philo Press, 1981), 76.

[2]Henri Munier, "Le lieu de la naissance de saint Cyrille d'Alexandrie," in *Kyrilliana* (Cairo: Editions du Scribe Egyptien S.A.E., 1947), 200-201.

[3]John McGuckin, *Saint Cyril of Alexandria and the Christological Controversy: Its History, Theology and Texts* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2004), 2.

[4]B. Evetts, ed. and trans., *History of the Patriarchs of the Coptic Church of Alexandria 2: Peter I to Benjamin I (661)*, in *Patrologia* 1 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1981), 427; cf. Lois M. Farag, *St. Cyril of Alexandria, a New Testament Exegete: His Commentary on the Gospel of John*, Gorgias Dissertations 29 (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2007), 11; this detail is questioned by modern scholars.

[5]Severus comments that "the grace of God was with Cyril, so that when he had read a book once, he knew it by heart" (Evetts, *History of the Patriarchs*, 428).

read through most of the New Testament during most nights of his study.[6] The result of all this is that he memorized the entirety of the Scriptures.[7]

Because these claims about Cyril's abilities are first recorded some five centuries after Cyril's life, one may reasonably suspect that they contain an element of exaggeration.[8] However, the *Commentary on John* displays a facility with the text of Scripture that is consonant with Severus's estimation of Cyril's powers. Cyril is able to matrix together passage after passage throughout Scripture on the basis of the fact that they contain the same word or phrase. For example, in his comment on John 5:35, in which Jesus refers to John the Baptist as "a burning and shining lamp," Cyril calls the reader's attention to other passages throughout the Scriptures that refer to lamps, with special reference to burning and shining.[9] Patristic exegetes often drew connections between passages on the basis of a shared word or phrase,[10] but Cyril's facility at this suggests that he may have had large sections of the Scriptures memorized.

When Theophilus died, Cyril succeeded him as patriarch in 412. Cyril's early episcopal career was stormy, to say the least, characterized by clashes with both the Jewish and pagan communities in Alexandria. These clashes culminated in the infamous murder of Hypatia, a renowned pagan philosopher. She was killed by a Christian mob, with which Cyril's involvement was unclear.[11] His later episcopal career was devoted largely to the Nestorian controversy. Nestorius described Christ in such a way as to give the impression that there were two acting subjects in Christ: a divine subject and a human one. Cyril, by contrast, strongly asserted the unity of Christ and insisted that anything that happens to Christ happens to the Word, not just to his human nature. Thus, for Cyril it was important to confess that Mary is the mother of God (*theotokos*), not just the mother of the man Jesus. Cyril continued his support of this unitive Christology until his death in 444.

Date

Cyril wrote the *Commentary on John* sometime fairly early in his episcopacy, before the

[6]Ibid.

[7]Ibid.

[8]Wickham dismisses the entire *History of the Patriarchs* as "a tissue of legend and misunderstood facts" (Lionel Wickham, *Cyril of Alexandria: Select Letters* [Oxford: Clarendon, 1983], xii-xiii, n. 3). Farag is more sympathetic to Severus (Farag, *St. Cyril of Alexandria*, 15).

[9]Cyril *In Jo.* 5:35 (see p. 165 in volume 1). He adduces Ps 132:17 (Ps 131:17 Septuagint [LXX]), Ex 27:20–28:1 and Lk 12:49.

[10]John J. O'Keefe and R. R. Reno, *Sanctified Vision: An Introduction to Early Christian Interpretation of the Bible* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005), 45-50.

[11]Popular presentations of the murder of Hypatia, such as that of Charles Kingsley's novel *Hypatia* or more recently that of the movie *Agora*, portray Cyril as the villain responsible for the murder. The difficulty with this interpretation is that it does not take into account the fact that Socrates, the historian contemporary with Cyril who reports the event, has a bias against Cyril. Socrates was a supporter of the Novatians, whose property Cyril had confiscated (Socrates *Ecclesiastical History* 7.7), so he portrays Cyril as a power-hungry tyrant, a characterization that Cyril's modern detractors are only too happy to adopt uncritically. That is not to say that Cyril is innocent in the matter. Indeed, there is plenty of material in the *Commentary on John* to trouble the modern reader, including Cyril's attitude toward the Jews, which I will address below. However, there is no evidence that Cyril was directly involved in Hypatia's murder, and it is equally as possible that the new bishop was simply unable to control the crowds. For a discussion of these matters, see McGuckin, *Saint Cyril of Alexandria*, 1-15.

outbreak of the Nestorian controversy. There is no mention in the commentary of Nestorius or of the particular slogans of the Nestorian controversy, such as *theotokos*. Though Cyril does occasionally attack Antiochene Christology in general, the position he opposes is not unique to Nestorius. Indeed, as J. Mahé has pointed out, Athanasius attacks a similar christological position in his letter to Epictetus.[12] When Cyril does name an opponent, he names Eunomius, not Nestorius. For these reasons, we can establish a *terminus ante quem* for the commentary of 428, the year when the Nestorian controversy broke out.[13]

A *terminus a quo* is somewhat more difficult to establish. The *Commentary on John* is an anti-Arian work, probably written about the same time as Cyril's two other anti-Arian works: the *Thesaurus* and the *Dialogue on the Trinity*. More specifically, the *Commentary on John* was the last of these three works since he refers to both of them in the commentary.[14] Cyril's *Paschal Letters* are helpful in pinpointing when Arianism became a live concern for him. His early paschal letters address issues of the Christian life, and Cyril's main opponents are the pagans and the Jews. In the letter of 424, however, Cyril becomes preoccupied with Arianism.[15] If we assume that the anti-Arian writings were composed about this time, this gives us a *terminus a quo* of about 425 for the *Commentary on John*. The scholarly consensus, on this basis, dates the composition of the *Commentary on John* somewhere between 425 and 428.[16]

Audience

Little attention has been paid to the question of the intended reader of Cyril's *Commentary on John*. Cyril himself says that he is engaging in "doctrinal explanation" (δογματικωτέραν ἐξήγησιν),[17] and he clearly employs the Gospel of John to refute the arguments of the Arians, Jews and pagans. Cyril does not expect, however, that his opponents will read his commentary. Instead, his goal is to equip his readers to respond to the arguments of the opponents.

The main opposing argument is the Arian contention that the Son is not fully God. The Arians claim that the Son is like the Father but not of the same substance as the

[12]J. Mahé, "La date du Commentaire de saint Cyrille d'Alexandrie sur l'évangelie selon saint Jean," *Bulletin de littérature ecclésiastique* 8 (1907): 43-44.

[13]See G. Jouassard, "L'activité littéraire de saint Cyrille d'Alexandrie jusqu'a 428," in *Mélanges E. Podechard* (Lyon: Facultés catholiques, 1945), 159-74.

[14]*In Jo.* 1:4 (vol. 1, p. 36), *In Jo.* 1:10 (vol. 1, p. 58).

[15]Jouassard, "L'activité littéraire de saint Cyrille d'Alexandrie," 168-69.

[16]Lars Koen, *The Saving Passion: Incarnational and Soteriological Thought in Cyril of Alexandria's Commentary on the Gospel According to St. John* (Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1991), 24. This consensus was developed in response to an earlier view on the part of German scholars that the *Commentary on John* was written late in Cyril's career (Mahé, "La date du Commentaire de saint Cyrille d'Alexandrie," 41). For views that date the *Commentary on John* earlier than the consensus does, see Noël Charlier, "Le 'Thesaurus de Trinitate' de saint Cyrille d'Alexandrie," *Revue d'histoire ecclesiastique* 45 (1950): 25-81; Farag, *St. Cyril of Alexandria*, 60-67.

[17]*In Jo.* preface (Pusey 3:7.13).

Father. Eunomius, who is the only opponent whom Cyril mentions by name in the commentary, takes that position one step further and claims that the Son is completely unlike the Father. In response to this view, Cyril tirelessly shows the reader from every conceivable angle how to prove that the Son is, in fact, God by nature.

Likewise, Cyril's polemics against the Jews are directed primarily against their refusal to believe that Jesus is God by nature. In fact, Cyril often elides the Arian and the Jewish views of Christ, represented by the Pharisees in John's Gospel, suggesting that they amount to the same thing. This does not mean, however, that the Jews in Cyril's commentary are merely idealized constructs for the sake of argument. There was a real Jewish community in Alexandria[18] with which Cyril often found himself in conflict. Cyril's incessant repetition of the charge that the Jews are unlearned and senseless is one of the most troubling features of the commentary. It seems to stem from Cyril's conviction that the Old Testament witness to the divinity of Christ is so clear that anyone who does not recognize it must be guilty of stupidity or malice.

Cyril does not spend nearly as much time in the commentary opposing the pagans as he does opposing the Arians and the Jews. However, the one pagan error that he consistently feels the need to correct is the idea that human life, including that of Jesus, is controlled by fate. When John states that Jesus' "hour had not yet come" (Jn 7:30), Cyril worries that the reader might infer that Jesus' death on the cross was decreed by fate, so Cyril takes pains to refute that interpretation.[19] He also wants to make sure that his readers do not imagine that fate renders good works meaningless for humans in general. In opposition to such a view, he stresses human free will.[20]

But who, exactly, needs to be able to negotiate the complexities of all these arguments? There is a good deal of evidence in the commentary that Cyril assumes that his readers are charged with teaching the faith, especially to catechumens. Sometimes Cyril rebuts the arguments of his opponents directly, arguments which he considers to arise from the opponents' evil will or madness. At other times, however, Cyril addresses questions that come from those who have a "devotion to learning," questions which are prompted by difficulties in the text of John itself. In those cases, Cyril anticipates that the questions will be posed by the catechumens and that his readers must be able to answer those questions. For example, when Cyril discusses the statement that Jesus' "hour had not yet come," his particular concern is that "some of those being initiated into the mysteries (μυσταγωγουμένων)" might erroneously suppose that Jesus is under the control of fate.[21] Cyril's rebuttal of this view, then, is addressed not to the pagans or to the catechumens but to those charged with teaching the catechumens.

[18]Robert L. Wilken, *Judaism and the Early Christian Mind: A Study of Cyril of Alexandria's Exegesis and Theology* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1971), 53.
[19]*In Jo.* 7:30 (see vol. 1, p. 296).
[20]Ibid.
[21]Ibid.

Cyril also draws lessons about pedagogy from the text of John, often portraying Jesus as a master catechist. For instance, Cyril presents Jesus' interaction with Nicodemus and the woman at the well as models for how to teach the faith to catechumens.[22] The main pedagogical principles that Cyril wants to impress on his readers are that teachers in the church should be tireless in their attention to detail as well as their efforts in teaching and that they should start at a level appropriate to their students and gradually lead them to the full truth.

One may infer from these concerns that Cyril wishes to raise the level of catechesis in Alexandria. Indeed, in a few places, Cyril makes explicit reference to a lax state of catechesis in his day. He complains that catechumens are being baptized before they understand that Jesus is actually God[23] and that catechumens are too quickly being ordained into the priesthood.[24] Cyril does not say how widespread these deficiencies are, but his constant attention to issues of pedagogy suggests that he envisions his readers to be engaged in the task of catechesis and that his goal in the commentary is to help them accomplish that task more effectively. To that end, he teaches the reader how to respond to the (in his view dishonest) arguments of the Arians, Jews and pagans, as well as how to respond to honest questions posed by devoted students eager to learn the truth.

Structure of the Work

Cyril divides the commentary into twelve books, and the books are further divided into chapters. At the beginning of each book, Cyril provides a list of chapters for that particular book, identified by headings that describe the doctrinal content of each chapter. The modern reader may be tempted to interpret these lists as a table of contents, as if Cyril were trying to superimpose some kind of doctrinal outline on the text of John's Gospel. It would be closer to the mark, however, to understand them as an index of topics.

The chapter headings would serve as a poor table of contents because they do not always provide a comprehensive summary of the material in each chapter. For example, the thesis for book 4, chapter 4 reads, "The holy tabernacle, which led the people through the desert, was a type of Christ, and so was the ark that was in it and the lamp and the altars, both the altar of incense and the altar of burnt offering. These signified Christ himself." Indeed, the bulk of chapter 4 consists of an excursus about the significance of the tabernacle and its furnishings. However, chapter 4 concludes with a discussion of Jesus' statement in John 6:70, "Did I not choose you, the twelve, and one of you is a devil?" This topic, however, is not included in the chapter heading.

Furthermore, Cyril states explicitly how he intends the reader to use these chapter headings. In the preface to the commentary, he informs the readers, "The list of the chap-

[22] *In Jo.* 3:11 (see vol. 1, p. 99); *In Jo.* 4:26 (see vol. 1, pp. 127–128).
[23] *In Jo.* 2:24 (see vol. 1, p. 96).
[24] *In Jo.* 4:26 (see vol. 1, p. 128).

ters below will show the subjects that the discourse covers. I have added numbers to it so that the readers will very quickly be able to find what they are looking for."[25] Thus, Cyril designs the commentary to be used as a reference work. This design makes sense if, in fact, the commentary is intended to aid catechists. When a catechumen has a question about whether souls existed before their embodiment, for example, or how Jesus can be God if he learns something from the Father, the catechist can consult the chapter headings and quickly locate where that topic is discussed in the commentary.

Finally, understanding the chapter headings as an index of doctrinal topics makes sense out of an otherwise odd feature of the commentary: the later books have far fewer chapter divisions than the earlier ones. Book 1, for example, consists of a preface and ten chapters, while Book 9 contains a preface and only one chapter. This is despite the fact that both books are roughly the same length. This can be explained, I believe, by the fact that most of the excurses and doctrinal discussions occur in the first half of the commentary. The second half is a running commentary on the text of John, so it requires far fewer entries in Cyril's index of doctrinal topics. It would seem that by the time he gets to the second half of the commentary, Cyril runs out of new issues to discuss. The second half of the commentary is still a rich resource for displaying Cyril's handling of the biblical text, and it covers such key events as the crucifixion and resurrection, but in general it does not contain as much explicit doctrinal discussion as the first half does.

Style

Cyril's literary style is complex and wordy. His sentences are lengthy, full of interlocking clauses, and his vocabulary can be unusual, even idiosyncratic. I have tried to preserve some of the structure of Cyril's long sentences, but there is no way to replicate the floweriness in English without making the text incomprehensible to the modern reader. For example, Cyril wants to say that the death of Christ overturned the devil's hopes. Instead of using the word *hopes* (ἐλπίδες), however, he uses the more expansive and abstract phrase "the things in the hopes" (τὰ ἐν ἐλπίσι).[26] I have rendered this phrase "hopes," since "the things in the hopes" of the devil would make no sense to the English reader. Another example of stylistic artifice occurs when Cyril says that the person with a pure heart will follow Christ and ascend to the spiritual mountain "at the time of the kingdom of heaven." In this case, the meaning of the words is straightforward, but the triple-nested structure is not: κατὰ τὸν τῆς τῶν οὐρανῶν βασιλείας καιρόν.[27] Cyril has so constructed the sentence that the definite article occurs three times in a row, each in a different case!

Stylistic characteristics such as these are distasteful to the modern reader. What Robert Wilken says of Cyril's *Contra Iulianum* could also be said of the *Commentary on John*:

[25] *In Jo.* preface (see vol. 1, p. 4).
[26] *In Jo.* 6:38-39 (see vol. 1, p. 221).
[27] *In Jo.* 6:15 (see vol. 1, p. 189), emphasis added.

Cyril's style is "prolix and turgid, an unhappy synergy of grandiloquence and affectation."[28] For Cyril, however, the affectation presumably conveyed a sense of erudition and prestige. By the end of the fourth century, Christianity enjoyed secure status as the religion of the empire. Along with this new status came a writing style that no longer reproduced the spoken Greek of the day, as the New Testament did, but one that imitated the glories of the past, drawing heavily on Attic forms.[29]

Before leaving the issue of style, there is one feature of the present translation that deserves some comment: inclusive language. I have tried to use inclusive language where it seemed possible to do so. This is not to suggest that Cyril thought of men and women as equals[30] but to produce a translation that conforms to the standards of English prose.[31]

Manuscript Tradition

The current translation is based on the critical edition of Cyril's *Commentary on John* prepared by P. E. Pusey in 1872, as part of the Oxford Movement's impetus to foster a return to patristic sources. Pusey's critical edition is in turn based on three main manuscripts ranging from the twelfth to the fifteenth centuries which, together, comprise books 1-6 and 9-12.[32]

Books 7 and 8 of the commentary have been lost, except for fragments that have been preserved in various catenas on the Gospel of John. Pusey has compiled these fragments in his critical edition. Twenty-one additional fragments have been discovered since Pusey's time and edited by Joseph Reuss,[33] and those also have been included in this translation with footnotes indicating that they come from Reuss. For the convenience of readers who wish to consult the critical editions, I have placed the page references to those editions in bold roman type within brackets. For appearance's sake, the publisher has often included them at the end of the previous page rather than at the beginning of the new page. Readers should be able to sort out which volume is in mind by the context.

Cyril's Exegesis

Patristic exegesis frequently seems arbitrary or even bizarre to modern readers. One reason for this is that modern readers and exegetes understand the meaning of the text to

[28]Robert Wilken, "Cyril of Alexandria's *Contra Iulianum*," in *The Limits of Ancient Christianity*, ed. William E. Klingshrin and Mark Vessey (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999), 43.

[29]Geoffrey Horrocks, *Greek: A History of the Language and Its Speakers*, 2nd ed. (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 155-59.

[30]See *In Jo* 4:16 (see vol. 1, p. 122) for evidence to the contrary.

[31]In general I have employed plural pronouns and verbs where the underlying Greek words are singular, as long as the meaning of the sentence does not depend on the subject being singular. In some cases, I have even used "they" as a gender-neutral singular pronoun, retaining the singular verb where that sounded natural.

[32]Codex Barberinus (twelfth century) contains books 1-6; Codex Vaticanus 592 (fifteenth century) contains books 1-4; Codex Vaticanus 593 (fifteenth century) contains books 1-4 and 9-12. Pusey also consulted the codex S. Marci Venetiis 121 (fifteenth century), which agrees with the Vatican codexes and seems to be copied from them (Pusey 3:vii).

[33]Joseph Reuss, *Johannes-Kommentare aus der Griechischen Kirche*, Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur 89 (Berlin: Akadamie-Verlag, 1966), xxv-xxvi, 188-95.

correspond to the original intentions of the human author. The exegetical task, from a modern perspective, is to discover this original intent by examining the text in light of the surrounding verses and in light of the historical circumstances of the author.

Patristic exegetes, by contrast, see their ultimate goal as interpreting a given text in light of the overall sweep of God's plan of salvation. Although they do give attention to surrounding verses and sometimes even to the historical circumstances of a text's composition,[34] they see these matters as preliminary steps in the interpretive process. The goal, however, is to explain how a given text fits into the *oikonomia*[35] of salvation. Since patristic authors hold that the Scriptures are inspired by the Holy Spirit, they are confident that the Scriptures convey not only truths contained in the surface meaning of the texts but also truths concerning God's plan of salvation. Exegesis is "spiritual" when its objects are spiritual, that is, not accessible to sense perception, such as forgiveness and salvation.[36]

In this description of patristic exegesis, I have intentionally avoided drawing a contrast between Antioch and Alexandria or between typology and allegory. In the twentieth century, histories of theology commonly intoned that Antiochene exegetes were more concerned with the literal meaning of the text and practiced typology (an exegetical method that is supposedly respectful of the historical context) while Alexandrian exegetes were more interested in spiritualizing the text by practicing allegory (an exegetical method that is supposedly dismissive of the historical context). However, the view that Antioch and Alexandria represent a sharp dichotomy between two exegetical methods that are fundamentally opposed to each other has largely been discredited.[37] When one reads the commentaries produced by both sides (rather than just the polemical literature) one finds that both sides give attention to the literal meaning of the text and that both are ultimately concerned to find the mystery of Christ in the Old Testament.[38]

Cyril's *Commentary on John* is an excellent example of this phenomenon. While Cyril is certainly capable of exegetical moves that strike modern readers as fanciful, most schol-

[34]Cyril, for example, relies on extrabiblical literature to outline the controversies that prompted John to write his Gospel (*In Jo.* preface to book 1 [see vol. 1, pp. 5-6]).

[35]*Oikonomia* is a technical term in patristic literature. In nontheological contexts the word refers to the management of a household. In theological contexts, it refers to God's plan of salvation, his management, if you will, of his household. It can also refer to the inaugurating event of that plan: the incarnation. Where Cyril uses the term in this technical sense, I have rendered it *oikonomia*.

[36]Robert Wilken, "Cyril of Alexandria as Interpreter of the Old Testament," in *The Theology of St. Cyril of Alexandria: A Critical Appreciation*, ed. Thomas G. Weinandy and Daniel A. Keating (London: T&T Clark, 2003), 21.

[37]Henri de Lubac, " 'Typologie' et 'Allégorisme,' " *Recherches de science religieuse* 34 (1947): 180-226; Jacques Guillet, "Les exégèses d'Alexandrie et d'Antioche: conflit ou malentendu?" *Recherches de science religieuse* 34 (1947): 257-302; Frances Young, *Biblical Exegesis and the Formation of Christian Culture* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1997), 186-213; Frances Young, "Alexandrian and Antiochene Exegesis," in *A History of Biblical Interpretation*, vol. 1: *The Ancient Period*, ed. Alan J. Hauser and Duane F. Watson (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 334-52; Peter W. Martens, "Revisiting the Allegory/Typology Distinction: The Case of Origen," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 16 (Fall 2008): 283-317.

[38]Guillet, "Les exégèses d'Alexandrie et d'Antioche," 260, 297.

ars have judged Cyril's exegesis to be relatively sober and innocent of the excessive allegory that is supposed to characterize Alexandrian exegesis, so much so that one important study of Cyril's exegesis notes that he has exegetical tendencies "commonly thought to be peculiar to Antioch."[39] One wonders, however, whether the fact that the patriarch of Alexandria practices "Antiochene" exegesis may indicate that the sharp contrast between Antioch and Alexandria is problematic to begin with.

Fundamentally, what is driving Cyril's exegesis is not a particular method but the conviction that the Scriptures are about the economy of salvation carried out by Christ and the commitment to use the Gospel of John to help catechists teach this faith to their catechumens. When Cyril makes connections between passages based on a shared word or phrase, or when he finds a small detail in the Gospel narrative to reveal a larger truth about the economy of salvation, he is acting consistently with this view of the purpose of Scripture.

Cyril's Way of Referencing Scripture

So far I have tried to describe Cyril's approach to exegesis in general terms, but there is one specific feature of the exegetical task that deserves a brief discussion: Cyril's way of referring to texts. Bibles in Cyril's day did not have chapter and verse divisions. They were, however, divided into sections (κεφάλαια) that corresponded to units of sense.[40] English Bibles do something analogous to this when they divide the text into sections and provide headings like "The Wedding at Cana" or "I Am the Bread of Life."

Occasionally, Cyril refers to the section divisions in his Bible, as when he compares the sections dealing with the Samaritan woman at the well, the royal official and the healing at Bethesda on the sabbath. He comments that they all show the Gentiles responding better to Jesus than the Jews do, and he notes that this conclusion flows from "the well-ordered placement of these sections (κεφαλαίων) next to each other."[41] Usually, however, he introduces a quote by identifying the speaker: "Christ says" or "the Evangelist says."

In many cases, he introduces a quote by saying that it says "somewhere" (που) and then goes on to provide the quote.[42] Rarely does Cyril name the book of the Bible from which he is drawing the quotation. The use of the vague term "somewhere" does not, however, indicate that Cyril is unable to remember the source of the quotation. It is merely a citation formula that is equivalent to something like "the Bible says."

This fact becomes clear when one surveys the many occurrences of this formula. First, the quotes that Cyril provides are almost always verbatim; they are not paraphrases. This suggests that he is not treating the quotations casually. Indeed, it would be incredible to

[39]Alexander Kerrigan, *St. Cyril of Alexandria: Interpreter of the Old Testament* (Rome: Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 1952), 443.
[40]Bruce M. Metzger, *Manuscripts of the Greek Bible: An Introduction to Greek Palaeography* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981), 41.
[41]*In Jo.* 5:1-4 (see vol. 1, p. 137).
[42]See *In Jo.* 1:1 (see vol. 1, p. 17), for example.

suppose that he could recall the verbatim quotes but could almost never remember the source of the quotes. Second, in a discussion of false prophecies, Cyril refers to a pair of passages from Jeremiah. He introduces the first quote by saying, "The Lord of all says most clearly somewhere (που) about them,"[43] and then cites Jeremiah 23:21. Then he adds a quotation from Jeremiah 14:14, introducing it with the words, "And again in Jeremiah."[44] This second introductory phrase reveals that he knows that both quotes are from Jeremiah, even though he introduced the first one with "somewhere." "Somewhere," therefore, should be taken as a formulaic way to cite a text rather than an indication of a lapse of memory. In fact, Cyril may have derived this formula from the New Testament itself.[45]

Advice for Reading

Cyril's *Commentary on John* is not the kind of text one can readily absorb by reading passively. If the reader does not bring questions to the text, reading Cyril will likely be a frustrating experience. Therefore, I offer the following list of suggestions to help the reader who may be new to patristic literature gain entrance into Cyril's world of thought.

- Do not skip Cyril's citation of Scripture in an attempt to "get to the point." Cyril's handling of Scripture *is* the point.
- Ask what connections Cyril is making between different texts and on what basis he is making those connections.
- Notice what passages Cyril finds difficult or challenging and in need of explanation.
- Try to reconstruct or imagine what the Arians might say about a particular text in order to understand why Cyril makes the points he does.
- Pay attention when Cyril launches into a summary of the entire story of salvation.[46] He has multiple ways of telling it.
- Cyril's discussions are often long, but their structure is not overly elaborate. Cyril seems to be writing down (or perhaps dictating) points as they come to his mind on a particular passage or topic. He does not seem to be following a master outline laid out in advance.

Modern readers may not always feel at home with the exegetical moves that Cyril makes, but they will be drawn deeper into the biblical text and be led to consider the story of Christ in fresh and unexpected ways.

[43] *In Jo.* 7:28 (see vol. 1, p. 294).
[44] *In Jo.* 7:28 (see vol. 1, p. 294).
[45] Cf. Heb 2:6, "It has been testified somewhere (που)."
[46] The classic example of this occurs in his discussion of Jesus' baptism (*In Jo.* 1:31-32 [see vol. 1, pp. 81-85]).

For Further Reading

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CHAPTER HEADINGS

BOOK 1[1]

1. The Only Begotten is eternal and before the ages; on the words "In the beginning was the Word."
2. The Son, who is both God and of the same substance as the Father, exists in his own hypostasis, just as the Father does; on the words "And the Word was with God."
3. The Son is God by nature and is in no way less than or unlike the Father; on the words "And the Word was God."
4. Against those who dare to say that the natural Word in the mind of God the Father is different than the one called "Son" in the Holy Scriptures. Such an evil opinion belongs to the followers of Eunomius; on the words "This one was in the beginning with God."
5. The Son is by nature creator with God the Father since he is from the Father's substance and not taken on as a subordinate; on the words "All things came to be through him."
6. The Son is by nature life. Therefore he did not come into being but is from the substance of God the Father; on the words "That which came into being—in it was life."
7. The Son is by nature light. Therefore, he did not come into being but is from the substance of God the Father as true light from true light; on the words "And the life was the light of humanity."
8. The Son of God alone is true light; the creation is not, since it participates in the light as something originate; on the words "He was the true light."
9. The human soul does not exist before the body, nor is embodiment the result of former sins, as some say; on the words "He was the true light which enlightens everyone coming into the world. He was in the world."
10. The Only Begotten alone is by nature the Son of the Father since he is from him and in him; on the words "No one has ever seen God."

[1]These headings are provided by Cyril at the beginning of each book. They are presented here for the convenience of the modern reader.

BOOK 2

1. The Holy Spirit is in the Son not by participation or as something brought in from the outside but essentially and by nature; on the words "And John testified, 'I have seen the Spirit descending like a dove from heaven, and it remained on him.' "
2. The Son is not an originate being, but as God and from God, he is over all things; on the words "The one who comes from above is over all things."
3. The Son is God and from God by nature; on the words "The one who receives his testimony has set his seal that God is true."
4. The properties of God the Father are in the Son not by participation but essentially and by nature; on the words "The Father loves the Son and has given everything into his hand."
5. The Son is not among those who worship, insofar as he is Word and God; rather, he is worshiped with the Father; on the words "You worship what you do not know, but we worship what we know."
6. The Son is not less than the Father either in potentiality or actuality when it comes to any work, but he is of equal might and of the same substance since he is from him by nature; on the words "The Son can do nothing of himself unless he sees the Father doing it. What he does, this the Son does likewise."
7. No God-befitting dignity or superiority is in the Son by participation or addition from the outside; on the words "The Father judges no one but has given all judgment to the Son."
8. Since the Son is God and from God by nature and is the exact image of the one who begat him, he has equal honor and glory with him; on the words "That all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father."
9. The Son is less than God the Father in no respect, but as God from God, he is equal in might in carrying out all his works; on the words "I can do nothing on my own. As I hear, I judge."

BOOK 3

1. A careful investigation of why Christ calls the blessed Baptist not just a lamp but a burning and shining lamp; on the words "He was a burning lamp."
2. The Son is the image of God the Father, which also convicts the Jews of not understanding the words spoken enigmatically by Moses; on the words "You have never heard his voice," etc.
3. Moses indicated the coming of the Savior when he said, "The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me."
4. Often Christ's withdrawals from Jerusalem indicate that grace will be transferred to the Gentiles. The same chapter contains the discussion about the five barley loaves and two small fish; on the words "And after these things, Jesus went to the other side of the Sea of Tiberias."

5. The Only Begotten is the imprint of God the Father's hypostasis, and there is no other imprint besides him that either exists or is conceived of; on the words "Which the Son of Man will give you," etc.
6. Concerning the manna, that it was a type of Christ's presence and the spiritual gifts given through him; on the words "Jesus therefore said to them, 'Truly, truly, I tell you, it was not Moses who gave you bread from heaven,' " etc.

BOOK 4

1. In no way is the Son less than God the Father because he is from him by nature, even though he is said by some to be subject to him; on the words "I have come down from heaven not to do my own will, but the will of the Father who sent me." In this same chapter there is also a most useful discussion of the precious cross of Christ.
2. The holy body of Christ is life-giving; on the words "I am the bread of life," etc., in which he speaks of his own body as bread.
3. The Son is not a participant in the life of someone else, but he is life by nature since he is begotten of God the Father, who is life by nature; on the words "Just as the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever eats me will live because of me."
4. The holy tabernacle, which led the people through the desert, was a type of Christ, and so was the ark that was in it and the lamp and the altars, both the altar of incense and the altar of burnt offering. These signified Christ himself; on the words "Where shall we go? You have the words of eternal life."
5. Concerning the feast of tabernacles, that it shows forth the restoration of the hope due the saints and the resurrection from the dead; on the words "Now the Jewish feast of tabernacles was near."
6. A discussion of rest on the sabbath, showing in various ways what it means; on the words "If a man receives circumcision on the sabbath, are you angry with me because I healed the whole man on the sabbath?"
7. A discussion of circumcision on the eighth day, showing in various ways what it means; on the words "If a man receives circumcision on the sabbath," etc.

BOOK 5

1. Our affairs are not, as the Greeks ignorantly suppose, subject to hours by necessity, but we proceed by our own choice both to the good and to the opposite, and we are directed by the will of God; on the words "They tried to arrest him, but no one laid hands on him, because his hour had not yet come."
2. After the Savior's cross and at his resurrection from the dead, the Holy Spirit made his abode in us permanently; on the words "For as yet there was no Spirit, because Jesus was not yet glorified."

3. The suffering on the cross was not the work of Jewish might, nor did Christ die because of anyone's mistreatment, but he himself endured this willingly for us, in order to save everyone; on the words "These words he spoke in the treasury, as he taught in the temple, but no one arrested him because his hour had not yet come."
4. The Son is God by nature, completely removed from likeness with creation, as far as his substance is concerned; on the words "You are of this world; I am not of this world."
5. The Son is not inferior in power and wisdom to God the Father, but he is his very wisdom and power; on the words "I do nothing on my own, but I speak these things just as the Father taught me."

BOOK 6

1. Physical suffering does not occur to anyone because of sins committed by the soul before birth, nor does God apply the sins of parents to their children or the sins of anyone to anyone else. He does not punish those who have committed no sin. Rather, he renders a just judgment for everyone; on the words "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?"

BOOK 7 (Fragments)

BOOK 8 (Fragments)

BOOK 9

1. The Son is in the Father by an identity of nature, and the Father, in turn, is in the Son.

BOOK 10

1. The Son is in no way less than God the Father but equal and similar to him in nature; on the words "If you loved me, you would rejoice that I am going to the Father, because the Father is greater than I."
2. The Son is of the same substance as God the Father, not of a different or foreign nature as some twisted people say; on the words "I am the vine, you are the branches, and my Father is the vinedresser."

BOOK 11

1. The Holy Spirit is by nature from God, and in the Son, and through him and in his substance.
2. His Spirit (that is, the Holy Spirit) is by nature in the Son and in his substance, just as he is also in the substance of the Father.

3. No one should understand the Son to lack any God-befitting glory, even though he is found to say, "Father, glorify your Son."
4. The fact that he is said to receive something from God the Father will in no way damage the glory of the Son, since there is a godly reason for this fact.
5. The Son will not be excluded from being true God, even though he calls the Father "the only true God."
6. The Son was not stripped of God-befitting glory, even though he is found saying to the Father, "Now glorify me with the glory which I had," etc.
7. The mention of something being given to the Son by the Father will not expel him from God-befitting honor, but he is clearly of the same substance and from him, even if he is said to receive something.
8. Even though something should be said to belong to the Father, it will not be excluded from the kingdom of Christ, for dominion over all things belongs to him as well.
9. The Son has the dignity of divinity by nature, even though he is said to have received this from the Father on account of his humanity and the form of his humiliation.
10. Christ is not holy by participation with another, nor is the sanctification through the Spirit foreign to his substance.
11. The Son is by nature one with God his Father, and he is in the Father, and the Father is in him according to the essential bond and mode of their unity. Likewise we ourselves, when we have received faith in him, are rendered one with each other and with God, bodily and spiritually.
12. The Son is by nature one with God his Father, even though he says that he received unity with the Father as a share of grace.

BOOK 12

1. The Son is by nature God, even though he is found calling the Father his God on account of us, on the words "I am going to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God."

CYRIL OF ALEXANDRIA
Commentary on John

[91]

Chapters in Book Six

1. Physical suffering does not occur to anyone because of sins committed by the soul before birth, nor does God visit the sins of fathers on their children or the sins of anyone on anyone else, punishing those who have committed no sin. Rather, he renders a just judgment for everyone; on the words "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" **[93]**

OUR FATHER AMONG THE SAINTS
CYRIL
ARCHBISHOP OF ALEXANDRIA
EXEGETICAL COMMENTARY
ON THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

BOOK SIX

Introduction

8:44 You are of your father the devil, and you want to do what your father desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and he does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him.

He had a good reason for denying their kinship with Abraham. He convicted them of behaving differently than Abraham and of being far removed from reverence toward God himself. Now he goes on to explain the reason they cannot accept his words, and then he shows who should more properly and fittingly be called their father. He says, "You are from your father the devil," whom he says "was a murderer in the beginning." He is a liar "and does not stand in the truth," and *his* father is a liar. In what follows, **[94]** he defines clearly who that is.

The vehemence of the brief passage before us makes it very obscure and calls for especially careful investigation. The explanation of this passage is deep, and I think it is not obvious to many. As far as the surface meaning is concerned, he is not assigning any other father to the Jews than Satan who fell from heaven. But the next passage about their designated father says, "He is a liar just like his father."[1] This confuses us; even more, it puts us at quite a loss. Who would we reasonably suppose is the devil's father? Who else fell before him to whom the later one may be compared in classification and behavior? After all, no one can show us such a reading in the divine Holy Scriptures, and what is not said in the divinely inspired Scriptures must in no way be received in faith. Every spirit who is considered a demon is called Satan, since that spirit is a child of the devil, according to the statement of Christ our

[1]Jn 8:44. Most English translations render this sentence from Jn 8:44, "He is a liar and the father of lies." Cyril's text reads ὅτι ψεύστης ἐστὶ καθὼς καὶ ὁ πατὴρ αὐτοῦ. This text is almost the same as the text that English Bibles are translating, but Cyril construes the pronoun αὐτοῦ to refer to the devil, while English translations take it to refer to lies. Thus for Cyril it means, "He is a liar just like his father."

Savior, "If Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself."[2] Yet we hear of one who surpasses and stands out above the others, to whom the prophet Ezekiel says somewhere, "You are the seal of his likeness and the crown of beauty. You were born in the luxury of the paradise of God. You were clothed with every precious stone."[3] Who else then can we think of as existing, who served as the pattern [of wickedness] for this one?

Some of the more ancient exegetes, when they interpret this passage, say that that ancient Satan who is understood to be the chief of all the other demons **[95]** has been bound by the power of God and cast into Tartarus itself, there to pay the penalty for the outrages he committed against God, but another one appeared after him who was equal to his father's brutality. They claim that this one is now the ruler of this age and he is the one the Savior was talking about when he said, "He was a murderer from the beginning" and "He is a liar just like his father."

Now if we did not take into account many other considerations besides this, we would have reasonably accepted this explanation from the surface meaning. But as it is, the following fact above all others prevents us from approving it without further investigation. At the time of our Savior's advent, the tyranny of the devil met the beginning of its fall, and the evil and unclean spirits were being sent into the abyss. At any rate, the demons approached Jesus and explicitly asked him "not to command them to go into the abyss," as it is written.[4] And we recall that they made a great outcry as well, saying, "O what do you have to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? We know who you are, the Holy One of God. Have you come here ahead of time to torture us?"[5] They knew full well that when our Lord Jesus Christ dwelt among us, he was going to bring about their downfall and cause them all kinds of grief, since they found much discussion on the matter among the Israelites. But they tyrannically accused him of arriving at the wrong time and perversely found fault with the timing of his advent. They say "ahead of time" on the assumption that they were not tortured at any other time, but they were anticipating one time, the time of the advent, at which they would doubtlessly endure what they were expecting.

We add the following consideration as well. If the former devil is bound, as some assume, **[96]** and some other devil deceived Adam and does not cease from the madness for which he is accused, then the first one will be completely innocent regarding us, and this explanation will apparently free him from all blame. He has not killed anyone, deceived or lied. Indeed, God was unjust to say to him, "As a garment stained by blood will not be clean, so also you will not be clean, because you destroyed my land and killed my people."[6] Now if we were to grant that he, who they say was first, was not involved in the evils we just enumerated, then whom will we decide the second one imitated? Or whom was he patterned after, since he surpasses his leader in wickedness and has a deeper imprint of evil than he does?

Perhaps it would not be unreasonable to go through more passages searching out the explanation of this, but we think it would be excessive to spend a great deal of energy on what does not require it. Therefore, we must move on to the next point and investigate carefully who the father is whom Christ assigns to the Jews—father in the sense of one who has the same behavior and mindset—so that a demon (the Prince of Evil, that is, Satan) might reasonably be listed as *his* father. He traces them back to Cain, who was the first person ever who did not love the one who chastised him but was shown to be the source

[2]Mt 12:26.
[3]Ezek 28:12-13.
[4]Lk 8:31.
[5]Mk 1:24; Mt 8:29.
[6]Is 14:19-20 (LXX).

of envy, murder, treachery, lying and deceit. He was second only to Satan, whose son he could justly be called in that he was smeared with the total resemblance of his wickedness.[7] After all, just as God is understood to be the Father of everyone who is holy and righteous, since he is the source of sanctification and righteousness for all, in the same way I think Satan might reasonably be called the father of everyone who is wicked, since he is the source of all [**97**] wickedness.

Since we have said that Cain was listed as the father of the Jews and Satan as the father of Cain himself, come let us go through our own words and clearly demonstrate that Satan was the first to rear his head against God's correction, that he then went on to lie and deceive, and that he finally committed murder because of envy. Then we will show that Cain has the same behavior and mindset as him. And third, we will bring home the argument to the Jews, who possess the image of his wickedness in its entirety.

Satan, then, despised his own dominion, as it were, and longed intensely for what was above his own nature. He did not keep to the limits of his own rank, so he was cast down and fell as a kind of rebuke by God and was taught the measure of his own nature. But because of his ill will, he gained no benefit from this but came down with a worse disease. He paid no attention at all to the need to be ardent in correcting his own attitude but fervently remained in an unshaken state of perversity. And when the first man was formed by God, according to the book of Moses, and was in paradise, still keeping the command that was given to him (I mean the one about the tree), Satan first began to burn with envy. Those first-formed humans indicted him, in a sense, for his own transgression and disobedience, since they were still keeping the command given to them, so he concentrated on dragging them away into disobedience with his tangled deceptions. Knowing what would be brought forth if they disregarded the orders of the great King, he persuaded them to do this and wrapped extreme tribulations around those who had done him no harm. After all, the very nature of the case will teach us that the transgression of Adam was a work of the devil's deception and envy, and so was the [**98**] death that pounced upon him as a result of it. And the saying of the supremely wise Solomon will make this just as clear, which goes, "God did not make death, but death came into the world by the envy of the devil."[8]

With these considerations, the account of Satan is clear. Now let Cain come and stand among us. He was the firstborn of Adam, a farmer by trade. Next after him came Abel, but he was a shepherd of sheep. Now when natural law called them to offer a sacrifice to God, implanting the knowledge of the creator without teaching them about it (since all good things have been sown and implanted in our nature by God), Cain brought "from the fruit of the ground," as it is written,[9] but "Abel brought from the firstborn of his flocks and from their fat. And God looked upon Abel and his gifts, but Cain and his sacrifices he did not regard. This grieved Cain exceedingly, and his countenance fell. And the Lord God said to Cain, 'Why have you become sorrowful, and why did your countenance fall? If you offered correctly but did not divide it correctly, did you not sin? Be still.'"[10] Then he said to Abel, "He will turn to you, and you will rule over him."[11] Therefore, Cain was blamed for not rightly dividing the offering, while Abel was justly considered worthy of praise and honor. And that became the food of envy for Cain. Just like Satan, he became exasperated at the

[7]Cf. 1 Jn 3:12, "We must not be like Cain who was from the evil one (ἐκ τοῦ πονηροῦ)."

[8]Wis 1:13; 2:24.

[9]Gen 4:3.

[10]Gen 4:4-7.

[11]Gen 4:7 (LXX).

rebuke intended to impart wisdom. Then in the throes of unrighteous envy, as we have said, he treacherously pursued his brother, already plotting unholy murder.[12] "Cain said to Abel his brother," it says, "'Let us go into another field better than this one.'"[13] He said this as though he were inviting him, who was totally unaware, to enjoy tender grass, **[99]** but he savagely destroyed him and turned him into the first corpse on earth. He was thinking, it seems, that he would win all the honors since he no longer had anyone who could outdo him. After he had committed murder, however, he told a lie. When God said, "Where is Abel your brother?" he replied, "I do not know," and because he lost all sense, he vehemently added, "I am not my brother's keeper, am I?"[14] He is practically saying, "You who crowned him unfairly—what good did you, his keeper, do him?" Do you see then, quite clearly, that the complete form of the devil's wickedness is already perfectly wrought in him, as it were, and that the conformity of his behavior is molded into an equal and comparable shape?

So let our discussion go straight to the unholiness of the Jews. Let us wrap them in the likeness of the wickedness of Cain and show that they tried to do the same things to Christ as Cain did to Abel, so that he may now justly and properly be called their father. Cain is firstborn, as we have said, and Israel, in turn, is firstborn among those who are children of God by adoption, according to the statement to Moses, "Israel is my firstborn son."[15] He offered the fruits of the earth as a sacrifice to God, but God "did not regard his sacrifices," as it is written.[16] Israel's worship of the law too is earthly in a way, with its oxen and sheep and fruits of the earth, and God does not accept it either. "Why," he says, "do you bring me incense from Sheba and cinnamon from a faraway land?"[17] And he cries out explicitly through the voice of Isaiah, "Who asked this from your hand?"[18] After Cain comes Abel the righteous one to sacrifice from the sheep. For Christ the righteous one came after **[100]** the worship of the law and at the consummation of the prophets. He did not bring fruits of the earth as a sacrifice to God the Father, but he offered himself to him as a spotless victim for a sweet fragrance for the life and salvation of all. God the Father rejected the worship according to the law as too earthly, and regarded the sacrifice of Christ our Savior instead. "He regarded" means "he delighted in it." Then what? Cain was rebuked for not dividing rightly, and after he was blamed, he grew sick with envy and rushed headlong into murder. And God was admonishing the people of Israel in his Son, asking for better offerings from them and telling them to transform the worship according to the law into spiritual fruit, pushing and urging them to convert the letter into truth. But when they are blamed, they get angry. They are struck by their father's envy, and they unjustly plot to kill Christ our Savior. Cain deceived Abel. He took him to a field and turned him into a corpse. Likewise, the Jews deceived Christ, as far as they could, by sending the traitor in the guise of a friend, who as he arrived to betray him, deceitfully kissed him while saying, "Greetings, Rabbi!" And then they took him into the field (that is, outside the gate) and destroyed him. For "outside the gate" Christ suffered on account of us and for us.[19] You see then how they are found to bear no resemblance to Abraham or his actual offspring, but they possess the

[12]The Greek text has φθόνος (envy), but I follow the younger Pusey's English translation in assuming that it is supposed to be φόνος (murder).
[13]Gen 4:8.
[14]Gen 4:9.
[15]Ex 4:22.
[16]Gen 4:5.
[17]Jer 6:20.
[18]Is 1:12.
[19]Heb 13:12.

image of their own father, who truly resembles them. And since they are extremely sick with a wickedness that is conformed and related to his, there is good reason for them to hear, "You are of your father the devil, and you want to do what your father desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and he does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. When **[101]** he lies, he speaks according to his own nature, for he is a liar just like his father. But because I am telling you the truth, you do not believe me."

The intent of the statement focuses on the father of the Jews (I mean Cain), who was brought up and highlighted in the statement. However, it applies more broadly as well. Christ does not limit the impact of these words to the behavior of that man but applies it to everyone like him, ascribing what was said of one person individually to everyone who resembles him. When Cain or another liar like him tells a lie, he says, they are speaking words from their own family, as it were. What they have, they learned from those who came before them and from the one who gave them the beginning of evil. They imitate their own father, making lying a kind of natural practice, since he "lies." Therefore, he says, since they have a father who loves lies, they now proceed by natural laws, as it were, to the lowborn character of their grandfather and father. They manifest their wickedness in themselves, while they positively exult in their own evil deeds, making the depravity of their forebears the flawless image of their own character and conduct.

It is customarily the case that the wickedness of the ancients, when it is engraved on those with the same character, causes them to be called children. So what prevents you from believing me when I "tell the truth" that I really did arise from the true Father and, as I said before, "I came from God and now I am here."[20] After all, if someone lies when they have a liar for a father and so they tell lies from their own family, as it were, wouldn't you have to think that since I tell the truth, I was surely begotten of the true Father and not, as you irreverently supposed, of some earthly father out of fornication and an unlawful union?

The Lord, then, might have used such words as these with the Jews. Now one must realize that in the case of humans or rational spirits, **[102]** family relationship is to be found in character and conduct, whether that relationship is with each other or going back to the devil, the father of all wickedness. In the case of the Only Begotten, however, this fact is taken only as an image of the subject under contemplation. With him, the resemblance has absolutely no discrepancy, since his family relationship with the Father is natural and essential. He is truly from him, and he possesses all his qualities as his own natural attributes, and he has the ultimate likeness to him in all respects. For this reason he is recognized as the form, image and imprint of the one who produced him. So since the Father is true, the one who is from him (that is, the Christ) must be the truth.

8:46 "Which of you convicts me of sin?"

This is not the question of someone who expects to be convicted but of someone who is taking away and completely denying the possibility that the true God, who arose from God, could fall into sin. Christ, after all, did not commit sin. All sin originates from a turning from what is better to what is not. It is brought forth in those who have a natural capacity for turning and who are susceptible to changing into what they should not change into. How then could he be understood to sin who knows no turning and is not susceptible to changing into anything improper but is unshakable in his own natural good properties—and this not from someone else but from himself? That is why the Lord asks the Jews

[20]Jn 8:42.

whether they can at all convict him of sin. This statement would extend to all transgression if one were to take it generally. When we fit it appropriately into the context, however, we do not say that he was at this time asking about every sin **[103]** and that he did so fearing to be convicted, but we understand it like this: since he was always eager to shame the sin of the Jews, he would not have allowed himself by this question to provoke them to repeat their former accusation, which we mentioned before, "We do not stone you for a good work, but for blasphemy because you, a human being, make yourself God."[21] On top of that, they might bring up his breaking of the sabbath, for which he was judged to be a transgressor in the extreme. The "sin," then, that he is referring to in the present question is lying. If I have never been convicted as a liar, he says, why were you intent on disbelieving me as someone who always tells the truth and who says emphatically and explicitly that I originated from the true Father and that I do not know how to lie? Give to your faith—give, I say—the unwavering conviction that I am surely telling the truth when I say of myself, "I came from the Father and now I am here."[22] But as for you, your father is the devil because you lie and plot murder just like he does.[23]

Something good does come from his accusation that they are plotting murder, since he thereby cuts short, so to speak, their attempt. When sin is exposed, it often blushes and retreats in some way, since it finds no way of going forward and reaching for its goal. But if it thinks it is hidden, it always increases and with unchecked impulses creeps toward the basest outcome.

"If I am telling the truth, why do *you* not believe me?"

He often repeats himself when he sees that they do not understand. Indeed, this is a practice that is highly appropriate for teachers. I am referring to the fact that when a statement is not understood the first time, he does not shrink from turning it around to show it from many different angles in order to settle it into the souls of his hearers.[24] For example, he says that when the liar **[104]** "tells a lie, he speaks from his own family, for he is a liar just like his father."[25] Why do you think and act in ways that disown the principle described here? Why don't you believe that I tell the truth, but instead assume that I depart from the truth, when I am in fact true just as the Father is? I suppose it is likely that he accuses the Jews of being feeble when it comes to taking in the words of truth, because they are not children of the truth. In vain do they falsely claim that God is their father when they say, "We have one father, God."[26] For God, he says, rejoices in the truth because he is completely the truth, and he wants those who worship him to "worship in Spirit and in truth."[27] And the children of the truth eagerly receive what is related to them, that is, the truth. But as for you, you don't believe me when I tell the truth because you are not children of the truth. The Lord seems to me to be saying something like this to the Jews.

One may easily see this by adapting the speech to someone else. Let's say someone of a sober character says to an unruly son or servant or neighbor, If I seem self-controlled to you when I avoid fornication and place the thought of it as far out of my mind as possible, why do you mistrust me and refuse to believe me when I say it is an evil and loathsome deed? Now he certainly would not say this expecting an answer to his question. Rather, through a

[21]Jn 10:33. Cyril mentions this passage in his comments on Jn 6:68 (vol. 1, p. 254) and Jn 8:28 (vol. 1, p. 342).
[22]Jn 8:42.
[23]Jn 8:44.
[24]This comment is particularly relevant if Cyril's commentary is addressed to catechists. See the discussion of Cyril's audience on pp. xvii-xix.
[25]Jn 8:44.
[26]Jn 8:41.
[27]Jn 4:24.

question that exposes unbelief, he is clearly convicting him of rejoicing in licentiousness and not accepting the words that would give him self-control.

Therefore, we will understand it in the same way in the case of the Jews, when Christ says, **[105]** "If I am telling the truth, why do *you* not believe me?" The form of such questions implies and is always attached to an assent on the part of those questioned. One might even say that the question to a great extent convicts them. That is because such a question accuses those whom we ask of lacking what we possess. Notice how he does not say without qualification or generally, "Why do you not believe me?" But he emphasizes the *you*,[28] subtly referring to those accustomed to fierce unbelief, while hinting that there are perhaps some with a nobler mind who do not retain in their own behavior the exact imprint of Cain's stubbornness, who even now are advancing to be enrolled among the children of God.

After all, we should not think that all Jews were immersed in sheer and utter senselessness. There were some who had "zeal for God," as Paul says, "but it was not enlightened."[29] This is why they hesitated a little when it came to faith. Now when we look at those so disposed and see their anger as they are inflamed to the point of bloody murder, we should assign most of the blame to the unholy scribes and Pharisees. They are the fitting recipients of the words, "Why do *you* not believe me?" It is as though Christ were attributing unlimited unbelief to them as their personal property. They were, after all, the leaders, and they persuaded their hearers to go along with their unholy deeds. That is why they are rightly accused of taking away the key of knowledge and of not entering [into knowledge] themselves while preventing others from entering.[30] So he says *you* as a specific reference to the leaders. **[106]**

8:47 "The one who is from God listens to the words of God. The reason *you* do not hear is that you are not from God."

The words "from God" in this passage should not be understood to mean that certain people are begotten of his substance (that would be foolish). Nor should it be understood in the sense it is used in Paul's statement, "All things are from God."[31] The divine Paul says that all things are from him because the one who gives existence to all things is the creator and originator of all. But that meaning doesn't work in the present passage since all people, both good and evil, are from God in that he is the creator of all. So "from God" describes the one who is like God in terms of excellence and lawful conduct. Such people are deemed worthy (so to speak) to be related to him in that he considers them worthy to be classified as his children. Furthermore, the one who is "from God," he says, will be eager to receive God's word with joy, since that which is related and familiar is always dear. But the one who is not "from God" (that is, the one who does not at all prize being related to him) would not gladly hear God's words. That is because good does not easily reside in the wicked, and longing for virtue is not something they would ever fight for since their mind is filled with ultimate depravity and looks only to its own will.

When Christ says, "The one who is from God listens to the words of God," let no one think that he is instructing us to take the divine voice only into our bodily ears. Who is there, even among very bad people, who could not listen to the voice of someone speaking,

[28]In Greek, this emphasis is accomplished not with italics but by adding the personal pronoun ὑμεῖς.
[29]Rom 10:2.
[30]Lk 11:52.
[31]2 Cor 5:18.

unless some disease had taken away their sense of hearing? So he puts the words *listens to* in this passage **[107]** to stand in for "consents, believes and hides in one's mind," as it says in the book of Proverbs, "The one who is wise will receive commands in their heart."[32] In the case of the foolish, or rather the despisers, the word echoes like a meaningless sound or a random and annoying noise, but it immediately escapes the heart of its recipients. It sinks into the heart of the wise, however, as into rich soil.

The Lord quite skillfully accuses the Jews of being senseless and exposes their unrestrained blasphemy when he says that his words are the words of God. He is reeducating them, he says, to think of him in a more appropriate way. They should not think that he really came from Joseph or any other earthly father; instead, they should believe that he appeared as God from God, from the substance of God the Father. They understand his point, so they get upset and burn with intense anger, adding "iniquity upon their iniquity," as it is written,[33] and they insult him even more.

8:48 The Jews answered and said to him, "Are we not right in saying that *you* are a Samaritan and you have a demon?"

Once more we ought to weep over the madness of the Jews and their utter stupidity. They are caught by their own words. They are like wild beasts when they leap toward the hands of those killing them. They themselves lend force to the knife. After all, when they are accused of lying as the custom and practice they grew up with, they immediately show this to be true. They are hurt by the Savior telling them that they are not from God, and in no time they manifest the precise image of the devil's wickedness in themselves. **[108]** They dare to say that God who comes from God is a Samaritan and a demoniac, while it is really they who have in themselves the bitter demon who is an enemy of God. For no one says, "Jesus be cursed," except by Beelzeboul, as Paul says.[34] In all these matters, they are exposed for their lies, insults and verbal abuse. Since they are accustomed to fight against God, they will pay the due penalty to the omnipotent judge.

We must also investigate why they call the Lord a Samaritan and a demoniac in this passage. After all, the introductory phrase, "Are we not right in saying," suggests that they have some reason for disparaging him as a Samaritan and the other thing they dare to call him. They call him a Samaritan on the grounds that he is indifferent to the commands of the law and thinks nothing of breaking the sabbath. This is based on the fact that Judaism among the Samaritans is not strict. Their worship has been mixed with foreign and Greek customs. Or they call him a Samaritan for a different reason: it was the custom of the Samaritans to testify falsely to their own absolute purity and to condemn others as defiled. (That is why, I think, "Jews have no dealings with Samaritans," as it is written,[35] and they avoid mingling with some others as well—out of a disgust for the defilement that would result, since they hold to this kind of foolishness.) Now when the Lord condemned the evil disposition of the Jews, he called them sons of the devil, but he testified to his own utter purity and complete innocence regarding sin, saying, "Which of you convicts me of sin?"[36] These are clearly the words of someone who is registering his own absolute purity, which he has because he cannot fall into sin. **[109]** And by calling the Jews children of Satan, he is condemning them for being defiled and for having a mind that is

[32]Prov 10:8.
[33]Ps 69:27 (Ps 68:28 LXX).
[34]1 Cor 12:3.
[35]Jn 4:9.
[36]Jn 8:46.

full of every kind of uncleanness, which is also true. So that is why they call him a Samaritan.

Next they say he has a demon because it is characteristic of demons to take the honor that is due God and give it to themselves and to seize God's glory without restraint. And this is exactly what they think Christ is doing when he, a human being, puts himself in the place of God by saying, "The one who is from God listens to the words of God,"[37] since he is suggesting that this statement applies to his own words. This, then, is the pretext for the Jews' verbal abuse, or rather blasphemy, against him and the occasion for them to say those things that served as a down payment for eternal fire.

It occurs to me that we should marvel at them for another reason as well. When they get angry that they were a number of times called sons of the devil and liars, they show by their actions that they deserve the accusation! What they should have done was to refute the charge by inclining toward virtue. But they displayed complete devotion to verbal abuse, and they presented irrelevant charges as though they applied. These are the characteristics of those who have been enrolled not as children of God but as sons of the devil. Not only do those wretched people heap abuse on him and tell lies about their head (since I don't want to say "Christ"), but they insist that they are "right" in doing so, refusing even a verbal admission of their wickedness. This is proof of total blindness.

8:49 Jesus answered, "I do not have a demon; but I honor my Father, and you dishonor me."

This statement is gentle, but it gets the point across. **[110]** With great emphasis he insists, "I do not have a demon." He is distinguishing himself from them, as it were, here showing himself to be free of the vice of verbal abuse, while demonstrating that it is true of them. For they probably would have shuddered at calling him demon possessed (since his deeds testified to them that he was God), unless they themselves truly had a demon. So he ingeniously says, "*I* do not have," thereby transferring the statement to them, as it were, and ascribing it to them instead, since that is truly how it is. "*I* do not have a demon," he says (but *you* do). And "I honor my Father" when I say that he is my God and I have come from God and when I further maintain that I do not know how to sin. For the one who is from God must—must, I say—be God. And he who comes from the one who cannot sin must be recognized to be of the same kind as the one from whom he comes. The opposite would have to be the case as well. (I am using circumspect language to avoid offending you.) That is, God would not be honored if he were thought to have a Son who is not God. The Father would not be honored, he says, if he were called the Father of one who falls into sin. Therefore, when I testify about my excellent qualities, I am not at all blaspheming as you suppose, he says; rather, I am honoring the one who begat me.

Furthermore, "I honor" him in another way as well. I am correct to say that you are not from God, since it would not be right to claim that those who have reached this level of wickedness and have been baptized with every kind of pettiness are from God. After all, the one whom he honors and deems worthy to be related to him is not the liar, the railer, the blasphemer, the haughty and the insolent, or the one accustomed to plotting unjust murder, but the one who is gentle, meek, pious, devoted to God and good. Therefore, "I honor the Father" in this sense as well: **[111]** I exclude those convicted of sheer wickedness from kinship with him. And you, in turn, "dishonor" me as I do this. You denounce the praise that belongs to the Father so that you are caught

[37] Jn 8:47.

blaspheming not only against the Son but now against him too. If I "honor" the one who begat me when I testify about my excellent qualities, then surely whoever clothes with extreme accusations the one who is from him, he says, will "dishonor" him. From every angle, then, Christ is consistent with his own words. He clearly shows that he is God by nature. And the principle of kinship by which the Father is honored, he says, reveals that the Jews are not related to God in any way, since the multitude of the unholy are expelled from any relationship with him. After all, what could be more unholy than those who say these things?

8:50 "I do not seek my own glory. There is one who seeks it, and he is the judge."

In these words, Peter's statement about our Savior is clearly seen to be true: "When he was abused, he did not return abuse; when he suffered, he did not threaten; but he entrusted himself to the one who judges justly."[38] See how when he hears the utterly vile fabrications hurled at him in their profane drunken rants (not once but many times), he remains kind and in no way departs from what is fitting for him. He does this as an example for us so that when we hurry to follow "in his steps,"[39] we may not be caught returning "abuse for abuse" or any other "evil for evil" to those who want to hurt us,[40] but rather we may "overcome evil with good."[41]

Therefore, "I do not seek my own glory," he says. He clearly does not say this to excuse those who decided to rage against him or **[112]** to encourage them to proceed quickly to this blasphemy. Rather, he is implying the following: I have come, he says, not to traffic in glory that comes from you or to strive for any honor or fame. No, I have humbled myself. Though I was in the form of God the Father, I became human on account of and for you.[42] So he who did not disdain taking the form of a slave—even though he could have remained in equality with God the Father and reveled in joys beyond thought and speech—how could he now be thought to seek glory from anyone? Isn't he rather enduring voluntary disgrace for the benefit of others?

Either this is what the Lord means by this statement, or we might suppose there is also another sense in which he does not seek his own glory. Although he could have immediately punished those who insulted him and exacted a penalty for their blasphemy (since they were acting irreverently toward him, the Lord of all), he calmly put up with their grief and endured it so completely that he did not want to strike back at those arrogant people even with mere words. However, so that blasphemy against God may not seem to be a viable course for whoever happens to engage in it, he had to block them with the Father's wrath as an obstacle, as it were, to prevent them from going straight down that road. Though the Son is forbearing and does not immediately take vengeance for his own glory, the Father will not put up with it, he says. He will be an avenger and rise up against those who insult him, not as though he were a comrade of someone else or as though he thought it appropriate that he choose to be grieved on behalf of an insulted saint, but because the sin reaches up to him. That is because nothing at all separates the Father and the Son (I mean as far as the identity of their essence is concerned), even though each one is understood to exist on his own. Indeed, that is why our Lord Jesus Christ says in another place, "Whoever does not honor the Son **[113]** does not honor the Father."[43] For the Son has the Father in himself by nature,

[38] 1 Pet 2:23.
[39] 1 Pet 2:22.
[40] 1 Pet 3:9.
[41] Rom 12:21.
[42] Cf. Phil 2:6-8.
[43] Jn 5:23.

and each one is glorified together and exists together. The Father, in turn, also has the Son in himself. Just as the Son shares in his essence, so also he shares in his glory in all things. The wretched Jews, then, will be punished for their blasphemy against the Lord and Son. They treated the entire consubstantial and holy Trinity with irreverence, and they grieved in the Son the nature that is king of all.

Everyone therefore who has any self-control must avoid whatever offends the good God. Just because he does not immediately inflict his wrath on those who offend him, that does not mean we should just roll over. He is good, "not inflicting his wrath every day, but if we do not repent, he will polish his sword," as it is written, and he will "bend his bow" against us. These are the "instruments of death,"[44] that is, every form of adversity and unbearable misfortune.

8:51 "Truly, truly I say to you, whoever keeps my word will never see death."

He shows us that it is superfluous to assemble long defenses against those who love to cast blame. He leans against this in favor of what was necessary—I mean, calling people to eternal life by faith. He practically says goodbye to those who had grieved him because of their ignorance, and he adorns this statement with a certain artistic skill. He said before concerning God that "the one who is from God listens to the words of God."[45] Then he immediately says, "whoever keeps my word," showing that he is God by nature. By this he further teaches that there is no more impiety left for the Jews to commit since they have said that he has a demon, though he is the one who **[114]** gives eternal life to those who choose to keep his word. After all, shouldn't he be recognized as God by nature by this statement too? Who else could give eternal life to those who listen to his words, except the one who is by nature God?

Now the divine word is kept when one does not transgress the divine command but stands in it and does what is commanded without delay, being free from any accusation of laziness regarding the divine laws. And observe once again how precise his statement is. He did not allow himself to say, "Whoever hears my word," but, "Whoever keeps my word." Many receive the word of God into their ears—not only humans who are guilty of sin, but the unholy mass of demons as well. In fact, Satan, the leader of them all, when he dared to tempt our Lord Jesus Christ in the desert, kicking against the goads[46] because of the great savageness of his character, set the divine word before him: "It is written," he said, "that he will command his angels concerning you, to guard you in all your ways."[47] Therefore, salvation does not consist in mere hearing, neither does life consist in learning alone, but in keeping what is heard. He set the divine word before them as a kind of canon[48] and boundary for life. He says that the steadfast guardian of his word "will never see death." This does not at all mean that he takes away the death of the flesh, but as God he does not count that death as death. For him, nothing is dead in that he can bring what does not exist into being, and when what is brought into being decays, he can easily give life to it. Or he means that the saints will not "see death" in the age to come. That age should strictly and truly be understood not to have an end **[115]** like ours does. When he says that those who have kept his divine word will not see death in that age, he is not implying that some will die after the resurrection—since the death of all people has been destroyed in the death of

[44]Ps 7:11-13 (Ps 7:12-14 LXX).
[45]Jn 8:47.
[46]Acts 26:14.
[47]Lk 4:10; Ps 91:11 (Ps 90:11 LXX).
[48]A canon is a measuring rod.

Christ, and the power of decay has been brought to an end—but he appropriately calls eternal punishment "death." You may learn this by looking at what he said above: "Truly I say to you," he says, "whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever does not believe the Son will not see life."[49] Yet all will rise to life and live again hereafter, both believers and unbelievers. The resurrection is not partial in the least but equal for all, at least in the sense that all must live again.

How then can it be that the one who does not believe the Son will not see life, when we expect all to be raised? From this it is ultimately clear that Christ customarily uses the term "life" to refer to long life in gladness and glory that never end. That is what is stored up for the saints in hope. So when he says that whoever does not believe the Son will have no glimpse of life (even though we expect all to live again), he is not here referring to the life of the body but to the joy that is prepared for the saints. In the same way, when he says that whoever is a noble and steadfast keeper of his divine words will never see death, he is surely not referring to the death of the body in this statement but to the punishment prepared for sinners. Just as in the former statement, joy is referred to as "life," so here punishment is referred to as "death." **[116]**

8:52 The Jews said to him, "Now we know that you have a demon."

Once again, they feel insulted when they are called liars, so they accuse the truth. But they testify, even against their will, to the words of the Savior, and with the very charges by which they dishonor him, they show that he is not lying. These wretched people are blind, and they have hearts so full of ignorance that they do not even think they need to rid themselves of the charges against them; instead, they fall into evils more shameful than the ones before, and they are caught in their own nets. Look! Look at the way they defend themselves and imply that they have not falsely railed against him. Their response convicts them as liars all the more, and they are bound even more tightly in the cords of their own sins, as it were.[50] In utter folly, they say here, "Now we know." They who often barked at him and claimed he had a demon say, "Now we know," thus condemning their previous unbridled tongues. After all, if they know *now*, then they didn't know *before*. How then could they claim he had a demon when they themselves thought he was not yet liable to accusation? Therefore, the irreverent people of the Jews were previously lying, and with unguarded mouths they were belching up the devil's malice against Christ. For confirmation of their nonsense, they seize upon the statement of Christ our Savior, thinking in their great madness, it seems, that the truth would aid a lie. Furthermore, they could have learned from their own words that they were committing ungodly transgression by hurling terrible insults at the giver of eternal life, but because of these very words they once again fail to see that they are reaching the extremes of sickness. Not only do they think they do not need to repent of these insults, but now they say that they are convinced that **[117]** what they said was the truth. . . .[51] The prophet is right when he says, "The ways of the Lord are straight, and the righteous will walk in them. But the ungodly will fall in them."[52]

Anyone would be astounded at their incomparable madness in the following point as well. When they see a countless crowd of demons and evil spirits crushed by one word from the Savior and driven out against their will from those whom they inhabited, they do not

[49]Jn 3:36.

[50]Cf. Prov 5:22.

[51]There is a lacuna in the manuscript here.

[52]Hos 14:9 (Hos 14:10 LXX).

shudder to say that he has a demon, even though they were fully assured by cogent arguments that Satan would not cast out Satan. For "every kingdom that is divided against itself is laid waste," says Christ, "and every house and city divided against itself is laid waste. Now if Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then will his kingdom stand?"[53] So behold, someone might say with good reason: "A people truly foolish and senseless. They have eyes but do not see; they have ears but do not hear."[54] They are not changed by words or teaching to want to think better thoughts, nor do they contemplate with the eyes of their mind the nature that rules over all things, but they pelt it with extreme insults like rocks—or rather, each one pelts their own soul.

"Abraham died, and so did the prophets, but you say, 'Whoever keeps my word will never taste death.'"

When the audacious people of the Jews lie about their own head and say to the Savior, "You have a demon," they mean to indicate nothing other than, "You make yourself God" on the grounds that **[118]** he plastered himself, as it were, with the honor and glory that belong to the divine nature. (That is what demons do, after all, as we have said elsewhere.) They consider nothing beyond what they can see, and they do not recognize God the Word in human flesh. Instead, without raising their mind even a little beyond what is corporeal but fixing it only on what is earthly, they are exclusively engaged with what is inferior and subject to touch. That is why these wretched people are scandalized and think that truth (that is, Christ) is telling lies. Indeed, they suppose that he is arrogating to himself the glory that belongs to the Father, not only allowing himself to be placed in equal rank with the ruler of all things but imagining something greater and thinking that he can do (and even promising to do) what God the Father did not do.

Next we will see why they say in their irritation, "Abraham died, and so did the prophets," and why they bring up the death of the saints to overturn Christ's words. They want to indicate something like this: We did not lie when we said you have a demon; the proof of our words is right here. Look, you promise that you will surpass God himself in miracles and that you can easily accomplish what he has not done. After all, Abraham and the prophets, even though they kept God's word, did not contradict the laws of nature but declined and fell into this common death of the body. And now you say that whoever keeps your word will have no taste of death. So how is that not saying that your deeds are better than God's? If someone thinks that they can surpass God, **[119]** how are they not obviously out of their mind? Because of their great ignorance, they think that the Lord is referring only to the death of the body in these words and that he is promising that those who believe in him will not die in the flesh. A sound mind, on the other hand, realizes that nothing is dead to God. Even though it dies, it is made alive again. After all, if something was brought from not being into being, how could it not be simpler and easier for that which was already brought into being to be called into being again, even if we recognize that it fell asleep for a little while because of the *oikonomia*? The Jews, then, not knowing the glory of the Savior, sneer at his words and call him demon possessed since he promises to do greater things that not even God has done. And for proof of their slander, they bring up the death of Abraham and the holy prophets. By this they think they are going to convict Christ of empty boasting (since he promises to give eternal life to those who keep his word) and of detracting from the glory of God (since he confesses that he will give them greater blessings).

[53]Mt 12:25-26.
[54]Jer 5:21.

8:53 "Are you greater than our father Abraham, who died? And the prophets also died."

The statement of the Jews is shadowy and pregnant with deep meaning. What are they saying here, with their human conception of him, bitter as it is, at least as they intended it? Look, they say, even though Abraham and the prophets kept God's word, they died. But we just heard you promise greater blessings to some people. After all, **[120]** when you say they will not die at all, the very fact of them not dying certainly makes them greater and puts them in a better position than those we just mentioned. Tell us then, they say, and answer our question: Are *you* greater than Abraham and the prophets—you who promise to make others greater than they are? So even though they die, you are not going to die but will remain immortal even though you are a human being and have an earthly body? How could you grant to others what you do not have yourself? In fact, you will surely die since you are human. And if you are not greater than Abraham and the prophets, you will be subject to death just like they were, so you will not be able to give others a benefit that does not belong to you. Their statement indirectly suggests this sort of meaning.

Do not be surprised if they have no greater conception of Christ. As we have already said many times and in many ways, they think that he is a mere human being who is one of us. They were completely ignorant that the only begotten God the Word was united to the flesh. "Who do you claim to be?"[55] In their limitless madness they almost go so far as to think of correcting the Lord for transgressing. And as if he did not know what was appropriate, they advise him to think more measured thoughts. Sir, they say, you do not know your own nature. You forget that you are human, and you are not content with the status God gave you. Who do you claim to be—you who promise to give greater blessings than his generosity and who hazardously say that you will accomplish more than his might? Thus they condemn him as a blasphemer and finally attack him like scorpions. They think that they need to rebuke Christ (and that they are quite right in doing so) for not respecting the status of humanity but leaping and jumping so far that he is carried beyond the glory possessed by the creator of all. And they also rebuke him **[121]** for trampling on the honor of the holy patriarchs and prophets. So when they malevolently utter the question "Who do you claim to be?" they intend to provoke him. They then expect to hear him cry out explicitly, "I am greater than both Abraham and the prophets," though the Lord would have spoken quite truthfully if he had said this. That is because there is no comparison between human beings and God, who is above all nature—both visible and spiritual.

8:54 Jesus answered, "If I glorify myself, my glory is nothing."

This statement is really about the person of holy Abraham and the prophets, but the Savior applies its meaning to himself in an attempt to persuade them. He is not unaware that the Pharisees are prone to anger, even without provocation, and that they take everything said about him as yet another reason why they must plot murder even more ferociously. Envy inspires the love of sin in whomever it arises and persuades them to take burning offense even over matters that least deserve it.

Now Christ was intending to insinuate something like the following. The Jews jumped on him and contradicted what he said. They endlessly brought up the blessed Abraham and the prophets all over the place, and they explicitly cried out, "Are you greater than our father Abraham, who died? And the

[55]Jn 8:53.

prophets also died."[56] Then in addition, they accused him of attacking the glory of the saints and raising himself far above them, saying, "Who do you claim to be?"[57] Now it would have been appropriate for the Lord to reply to these charges in plain terms and say clearly, I am superior and greater than Abraham and the prophets. But the arrogant Jew would not have tolerated that answer. **[122]** He would immediately have gotten angry at it. Feigning love for the Father and pretending to advocate for the glory of the saints, he would have fiercely attacked Christ. In his anger, he would have thought it right to plot his murder already now. That is why the Lord applies the words to himself and says, "If I glorify myself, my glory is nothing." He practically says this: Let no one on earth think they are great. If we wish to understand for ourselves what human glory is, we will find it to be nothing. "For all flesh is grass, and all human glory is like the flower of the field."[58] It's no wonder Abraham died, he says, and the prophets after him. What is human glory, after all, when human nature is tyrannized by both death and decay and for this reason is compared with easily fading grass?

It is likely that when he skillfully applies the status of Abraham and the prophets to himself and says, "My glory is nothing," he is leading the Jew to remember what Abraham says quite clearly about himself, "I am earth and ashes,"[59] and to recall the prophets who cried out to God, "Remember that we are dust."[60] Now we are certainly not saying by this that he, who glorifies the saints, is really finding fault with their glory. Rather, it was necessary for him to say this. The goal of benefiting them required him to demonstrate how great a difference there is between his divine and ineffable nature and those who succumb to death and decay.

"My Father is the one who glorifies me." For precise illumination and contemplation of what this means, I will exhaust the same statements and go through the same words as before. **[123]** The Jews said, "Are you greater than our father Abraham, who died? And the prophets also died. Who do you claim to be?"[61] They were always posing this as an invincible question and a point that could not be overturned. They truly thought that he too would die and that he too would succumb to death and decay. They thought that he would not be greater in this regard than Abraham and the prophets and that there was nothing great about him at all. So finally, as the situation demanded, our Lord Jesus Christ, who is of the eternity of the one who begat him, shows that he is eternal. That is why he says, "My Father is the one who glorifies me." He intends the word *is* in this statement to be understood not in a simple way without investigation, but he put it there to indicate the being of the Father. Moreover, the Son, who is ineffably begotten of the Father who is, surely brings with him the property of his begetter, that is, being. Therefore, he is greater than Abraham and the prophets. They died since they are earth-born of mortal fathers. But he, who incomprehensibly comes forth from the one who is, *is* always glorified by his Father—not that he lacks glory (since he is the King of Glory),[62] but that he can boast that he is begotten of the eternal Father. Therefore, he too is eternal, since he carries essentially the dignity of the one who begat him.

Now the statement that the Father glorified the Son will do no damage to a divine view of the Son since the Father himself is glorified in a similar way by the Son—not that he lacks

[56]Jn 8:53.
[57]Jn 8:53.
[58]Is 40:6.
[59]Gen 18:27.
[60]Ps 103:14 (Ps 102:14 LXX).
[61]Jn 8:53.
[62]Ps 24:10 (Ps 23:10 LXX).

glory, but it is considered to be and is glorious to be known as the Father of such an offspring (that is, one who is God in himself). That is why, you know, the Son himself says to the Father, "Father, glorify your Son, so that the Son **[124]** may glorify you."[63] Therefore, human glory is nothing at all. That which comes from the earth falls into death, so far as the body is concerned, even though it will rise again. The Only Begotten is glorified by the one who begat him since, along with all the other good properties, he has the property of his substance as his own. The blessed psalmist briefly indicates how great the difference is between him and all creation when he cries out, "The heavens will perish, but you will remain. They will all wear out like a cloak. You will change them like a covering and they will be changed. But you are the same, and your years will have no end."[64] Everything that is created is subject to decay, even if it has not yet decayed because it is preserved by God's will. But God is incorruptible and eternal by nature. He does not obtain this by the will of someone else, like creation does; rather, he always exists in his own good properties, and this property is one of them.

8:55 "Of him you say, 'He is our God,' but you do not know him."

Again he accuses them (and with special fervency) of practicing love of God in mere words only but being far removed from the true knowledge of God. He is practically uttering to them the declaration of the prophet, who once said, "This people draws near to me; they honor me with their lips, but their heart is far from me."[65] Now for their benefit and in conformity with that ancient statement, he says, "You did not know him." And his statement is true. After all, just because someone happens to know that God exists, that does not at all mean they have the knowledge of God. The fact that God is and exists is something that "even the demons believe, **[125]** and tremble," as it is written.[66] In addition to knowing that he exists, one should have opinions about him that are fitting and appropriate to him. For example, I suppose that no sober person would busy themselves trying to figure out what God really is by nature, since that is impossible to find out. However, one could easily find out what his attributes are and are not by attending to the Holy Scriptures. So we know and believe that he is powerful; we know that he is not weak. We know that he is good; we know that he is not wicked. We know that he is righteous and, correspondingly, that he is not unrighteous. We know that he is eternal; we are convinced and believe that he is not limited to time, neither is he transient like we are. Now the Jews, insofar as their verbal statements go, confessed clearly that God is their God, though they were nonetheless ignorant of him. But when it comes to the fact that he is incorruptible and eternal, we will find that they did not understand. If they had known, I don't think they would have sunk to such madness as to think that the only begotten Son, who comes from his substance, would die. Nor would they have brought up the death of Abraham and the prophets and senselessly said to him, "Who do you claim to be?" Isn't it quite reasonable to say that anyone who knows who the Father is by nature must believe that the Word who comes from him is the same? After all, from a sweet spring, a sweet stream surely proceeds, and from good trees, the offspring will surely be good. In the same way, I think we must believe that the one who is from God by nature is true God and the offspring of the eternal Father is eternal, just

[63]Jn 17:1.
[64]Ps 102:26-27 (Ps 101:27-28 LXX).
[65]Is 29:13.
[66]Jas 2:19.

like his Father. Therefore, it is appropriate to say to the Jews here too, "Either make the tree bad and its fruit bad, or make the tree good and its fruit **[126]** good. For a good tree cannot produce bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot produce good fruit."[67] How then is it possible, or rather how is not utterly foolish, to think that the offspring of the immortal Father is mortal and to number the one who knows no corruption with those who are subject to corruption?

"I know him. If I said that I do not know him, I would be a liar like you."
I did not lie, he says, when I said to the Jews, "Whoever keeps my word will never see death."[68] I am able to make people immortal since I know that the one from whom I am is strong enough to do this; I know that my Father is life by nature. Therefore, I too am like him, that is, I am by nature life and life-giving. If I denied my ability to give life, I would be ignorant of the Father. Since I have the property of his substance, I am able to give life, just like he does. So I confess that I have all the properties that are in the Father and that I am like him. And by doing his works, I declare and promise with certainty that "I know him." But if I say that I do not have the Father's unaltered attributes in myself, "I would be a liar like you," not knowing the Father. Indeed, when I say that the glory of Abraham and the prophets is nothing (since they were from the earth and human by nature, and death was not foreign to them), and when I say that the Father's eternity is my glory, I say such things because I know the Father. But if I say that I will decay like they did and that I am not coeternal with the Father, I would be lying like you, ignorant of the Father from whom I am. That is because it is impossible that he who is from him who is and remains always the same should not himself be and remain always the same. The offspring of the eternal is eternal.

Now someone might take the passage more simply and say that it **[127]** was spoken in a different way. "I know," he says, my Father. If I say I do not know him, "I would be a liar like you." You do not know God, but you claim to know him.

Since we have already discussed clearly how one knows him and what the charge for not knowing him is, we will add nothing further.

"But I know him, and I keep his word."
As far as the passage at hand is concerned, we say this: Christ is speaking again as a human being, and he is bringing himself down again to our condition, not rejecting the appearance appropriate for a slave at the proper time. So he says that he both knows the Father and keeps his word. We will surely not say that he must be giving this testimony about himself or that he is recounting anything that belongs to him, but there is great skill mixed into this statement. By saying that he both knows the Father and keeps his word, he shows that the Jews have the opposite mind from that which he asserts he has, namely, that they neither know God nor think that they should keep his word. Otherwise they would have eagerly received the one proclaimed ahead of time by Moses and the prophets. We can find among ourselves as well this kind of well-adapted, excellent speech that on the one hand has the power of reproof and gently points out to people their faults, but on the other hand heads off their anger at being rebuked. For example, say there is a certain man who is self-controlled and otherwise good who rebukes the thief and the drunkard by saying, "I am a self-controlled man; I have never stolen what belongs to others, nor have I ever been drunk." Now such a man is certainly not giving testimony about himself through this statement, and we should not take his words that

[67]Mt 12:33; 8:18.
[68]Jn 8:52.

way. On the contrary, he is clothing those whom he is criticizing with the opposite of the qualities he possesses. In this way, then, our Lord **[128]** Jesus Christ too says that he knows the Father and keeps his word, thereby clothing the unholy Jews by reverse implication with the fact that they neither know God nor put up with his word, and they do not consider the law prescribed to them from above to be worthy of any observance whatsoever.

If, however, we must consider the passage from a different angle as well and examine more subtly what is obliquely indicated, then we will add the following: the Son knows his Father not with the kind of knowledge found among us but with God-befitting and indescribable knowledge. Just as a human born from a human is not ignorant of the nature of their begetter—not because they learned it from anyone else, but they know it just from who they are—so also the Son "knows" his begetter just from who he is, and he "keeps his word," that is, he has the definition of his essence preserved whole in himself. *Logos*, after all, means definition.[69] The *logos* of a human being (that is, the definition of humanity's essence) is: a rational animal, mortal and receptive of intellect and knowledge. The *logos* of an angel, let's say, would be understood to be the definition of its essence. But in the case of God, it is not possible for us to grasp the *logos* or definition of his nature because we do not know what he is by nature. The Son, however, knows his own Father, and since he is begotten of his essence, he knows what his begetter is by nature. Drawing from our usage and employing human words, he says that he keeps the Father's *logos* (as if to say the definition of his essence) in himself. **[129]** After all, he is the image of the one who bore him and the imprint that can be accused of no discrepancy whatsoever. He contains in himself all the God-befitting and excellent qualities of the one who begat him.

8:56 "Abraham your father rejoiced to see my day; he saw it and was glad."

By *day* here, he is referring to nothing other than the time of his advent, when the true light shone on us and the sun of righteousness arose. Darkness held us at that time, as the prince of this world tyrannized and blackened the whole world, as it were, with his perversities and sank it into polytheistic deception, darkening the mind of each person in a different way. But that darkness was scattered like the mist. That is why the divine psalmist, thinking of the thrice-longed-for time of his advent as a "day," raised his voice in advance, saying in the Spirit, "This is the day which the Lord has made. Let us rejoice and be glad in it."[70] It is especially the custom of the Holy Scripture to refer to the time of each matter as its "day." For example, "The day of the Lord of hosts is against everyone who is proud and haughty, and they will be humbled."[71] And again, "What will you do on the day of the assembly and on the day of the feast of the Lord?"[72] And the psalmist says that all their plans will perish "on that day,"[73] again defining *day* as the time of the expected divine judgment, when the illustrious of the world will get no help from the deceit of their old plans or the empty swelling of their brows at their wealth.

So he says, "Abraham your father rejoiced to see my day; he saw it and was glad." How or when **[130]** should we think the blessed Abraham has seen the day of Christ our Savior, that is, the time of his advent in the flesh? This statement is not easy. One cannot explain the meaning by deriving it from its opposite. Nevertheless, we will consider the

[69] *Logos* is the term here translated as "word" in Jesus' phrase "I keep his word" (Jn 8:55). As Cyril's discussion illustrates, the term *logos* has a much wider range of meaning than the English term *word*.

[70] Ps 118:24 (Ps 117:24 LXX).

[71] Is 2:12.

[72] Hos 9:5.

[73] Ps 146:4 (Ps 145:4 LXX).

relevant issues as well as we can and offer the following explanation: God revealed his own mystery to Abraham just as to one of the holy prophets. Or we will propose that he truly saw the day of the Lord's slaughter (which made all things auspicious for us and blew everything in the right direction like a fair wind) when he was instructed to offer his only begotten firstborn son (that is, Isaac) as a sacrifice as a type of him. As he was carrying out this priestly act, the clear and precise meaning of the mystery probably came to him at that time in the form of the type that he was performing.

One could grant other instances of this as well to those who are particularly studious. Indeed, he saw three men "by the oak of Mamre"[74] and received a promise from God that he would be the father of many nations. This could not be fulfilled in any other way except by the Gentiles being called by faith in Christ. In this way, they register Abraham as their father, and they will recline with him in the kingdom of heaven[75] and will participate with him in our Savior's lavish generosity in all good things. So the blessed Abraham "saw my day," he says, and when he saw it, "he was glad."

Next we must show why Christ proceeds to say these things. Since the Jews saw him as a human being because of the garment of flesh, they attributed nothing God-befitting to him, but they thought he was mortal like us inasmuch as he too was brought from nonbeing into being. The fact that he was eternal from an eternal Father—this they did not want to believe because of their foolishness. So he says these things to show clearly that he is not a recent arrival or newly created like we are, but that **[131]** he was known even to their most ancient fathers, since he is eternal. In the same statement, it seems to me, he profitably rebukes them because, acting foolishly and thinking ignorantly, they reject what was, for the head of their race, a feast. After all, he merely "saw" and he rejoiced, while they, when they had him and could benefit from him, insulted him by their unbelief and boasted in themselves against such glorious grace. Or perhaps he is indirectly indicating the following: that he is both greater and superior to Abraham since it was a festal assembly for Abraham just to know something about him. He could not say this openly without some kind of veil because of their uncontrolled propensity to anger, so he says the same thing in a different way.

No one should think that Jesus is contradicting himself when he says to the Jews, "Abraham your father died,"[76] just because at one point he excludes them from kinship with Abraham by saying, "If you were the children of Abraham, you would do what Abraham did,"[77] but now he calls them sons of Abraham. We must recognize that in both cases, he expertly guides his statement to the truth. In the former statement, he singles out the quality of spiritual nobility and depicts a relationship constituted by the same behavior. In the latter, he attributes to them only a bare relationship of the flesh. So he is telling the truth in the former, and he is not lying in the latter.

8:57 Then the Jews said to him, "You are not yet fifty years old, and you have seen Abraham?"

The Jews' response is quite foolish and utterly ridiculous. One may with good reason marvel at them for going off into such stupidity **[132]** that they are completely unable to understand what they ought to understand. Christ our Savior fashions countless revolutions of instruction for them, going back and forth through the same words and giving them many

[74]Gen 18:1.
[75]Mt 8:11.
[76]Cyril seems to be conflating Jesus' statement "Abraham your father rejoiced" (Jn 8:56) with the Jews' question "Are you greater than our father Abraham, who died?" (Jn 8:53).
[77]Jn 8:39.

indications of his own eternity, but they think no further than what they see with their bodily eyes. As though they are completely unhinged and have lost their mental faculties, they do not reach with their heart toward what is fitting for God, but once again they irrationally accuse him of lying, as if he were some human being like us, who began to exist and to be classified as existing only at the moment when he was begotten. They do not even correctly understand what they heard him say. He said, "Abraham saw my day," but they reverse the meaning of his statement since they say, "You are not yet fifty years old; how have you seen Abraham?" Pitiful, then, is the senseless Jew, ever the friend of deep ignorance, raised with his wild companion insanity.

8:58 Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly I say to you, before Abraham came into being, I am."

Once again Christ goes to his usual favorite device. He sometimes speaks quite enigmatically, and by concealing his explanation in various shadows he prevents it from being clear to all. But when he sees that his hearers do not understand, he strips his speech of its obscurity and sets it before them plainly and clearly. Indeed, he is eager to do this in the present case as well. He finds that they understood nothing, even though he had gone through a long discourse, and that they just could not understand that he is eternal from an eternal Father and that, as God, he is incomparably greater than Abraham. So he now states explicitly, **[133]** adding the word *truly* as an oath to confirm what he is saying, "Before Abraham came into being, I am." And there is no way we should think that the Only Begotten is insisting that he is before Abraham alone. No, he is before all time, and his generation is the most ancient of all, since he is without beginning in the Father. But since the comparison with Abraham is the issue at hand, he says that he is older than him, just as if the number one hundred, for example, were to say, "I am greater than ten." It would obviously not say this because it holds the next place after ten but because it far exceeds and is beyond ten. Therefore, he is not competing with the times of Abraham, nor does he assert that he predates him by a little, but since he is above all time and he leaps over the number of every age, he says that he is also before Abraham. And he is telling the truth.

Furthermore, he quite properly and elegantly applies the phrase *came into being* to Abraham, but for himself he uses the word *am*. By this he is pointing out that the one who came into being from nothing would necessarily be subject to decay, while the one who always exists would never experience going into nonbeing. Therefore, he is greater and stronger than Abraham: greater because he is eternal, and stronger because he does not waste away like Abraham does.[78]

8:59 Then they picked up stones to throw at him, but Jesus hid himself and went out of the temple.

They do not see the truth since they themselves are liars and they have a liar for a father, as the Savior said.[79] Once again they get upset at what is not distressing. They thought they should contend for the glory of their forefather, as if it were being slighted, and so they were inflamed once again with an inappropriate anger, even though they should have seen at a glance **[134]** the meaning of the statement and who it is who made it. Nevertheless, they

[78]The contrast between "came into being" (γένεσθαι) and "I am" (εἰμί) is important for Cyril since it evokes the difference between the created order, characterized by becoming, and God, characterized by permanent being. Cyril draws attention to this same contrast in his remarks on Jn 1:6, where these two verbs are applied to John the Baptist and the Word, respectively. See vol. 1, p. 40.

[79]Jn 8:44.

fall into an animal fury that is utterly irrational, and they try to sling stones at him, as if they had not already offended him enough with their railing, or as if they were only storing up a little wrath against themselves because of their folly. What the Jews tried to do, then, was rash and utterly irrational, but it does not progress to the point of premature action because the time of his suffering had not yet arrived.

Christ hides himself not by retreating beneath a wall or by putting anything else in front of his body; rather, by the power of his divinity, he renders himself invisible to those who are after him. And it was not enough for him to evade them, but he goes "out of the temple," thereby sketching for us a type of spiritual matters. To those who love him he is always visible, according to the statement, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God."[80] He runs away, however, from those who are prone to fight against God, and he is visible to none of the irreverent. He does not like to dwell with those who persecute him or be with them in any way, but he departs from them and removes himself, taking with him all joy and leaving them bereft of his graces since he would suffer harm at their hands (as far as their intention to harm him is concerned, I mean, and what the irreverent tried to do). Nevertheless, Christ renders it all vain, and by his unspeakable power he makes the unholy audacity of those who sinned against him disappear.

9:1 And as he was passing by, he saw a man blind from birth.

With the Jews raging against him and trying to hit him with stones, he suddenly departs from their temple and escapes from the unholiness of his pursuers. While he is running by, he immediately sees a man "blind from birth." **[135]** This too is put here as a crystal-clear sign that he will remove himself from the brutality of the Jews and abandon the multitude of God's enemies, and he will visit the Gentiles instead and transfer to them the abundance of his kindness. He compares them to a man "blind from birth" because they were in error from their origination and from their earliest youth, as it were, they were bereft of the true knowledge of God and did not have the light from God, that is, illumination by the Spirit.

It is fitting to pay attention to what Christ's visiting the blind man "as he was running by" is intended to indicate. It occurs to me to think of the fact that, strictly speaking, Christ came not for the Gentiles, but for Israel only, just as he says somewhere, "I was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."[81] Sight was restored to the Gentiles by the side of the road, as it were, when Christ transferred his mercy to them because of Israel's disobedience. This was what Moses sang of ahead of time, "I will make them jealous with what is no nation, and I will provoke them with a nation that has no understanding."[82] It was a nation without understanding that served the "creature rather than the creator"[83] and like irrational beasts fed on all ignorance without distinction, paying attention only to earthly matters. But Israel, which was wise because of the law and had understanding because it had the prophets, angered God. Therefore, God provoked them in return by giving their rightful place to those who previously had no understanding. By faith, Christ has become for them "wisdom and sanctification and redemption,"[84] as it is written, and clearly also light and restoration of sight. **[136]**

[80]Mt 5:8.

[81]Mt 15:24.

[82]Deut 32:21. In this passage, the word for "nation" is the same as the word for "Gentile."

[83]Rom 1:24.

[84]1 Cor 1:30.

Chapter One

Physical suffering does not occur to anyone because of sins committed by the soul before birth, nor does God visit the sins of the fathers on any, punishing those who have committed no sin. Rather, he renders a just judgment for everyone.

9:2-3 And his disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" Jesus answered, "Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God's works might be revealed in him."

The wise disciples quite reasonably wanted to learn an important lesson here, or rather God urged them to want to learn it. Their curiosity is profitable not so much for themselves as for us. We receive immeasurable benefit by hearing from the omniscient one what the true glory is in this situation and also by being warned away from the abomination of fleeting doctrines. These errors came not from the Jews alone, but now they are also advocated by some who are insufferably conceited about their knowledge of the inspired Scripture and seem to pass for Christians. These people take too much delight in their own ingenuity and are slaves to their own wills. They are not afraid to mix Greek error with the doctrines of the church. **[137]**

For example, when the Jews were suffering, they complained bitterly that they were paying the penalty for the transgressions of their forebears and that God was unreasonably laying on them the sins of their fathers, and they scoffed at the unjust judgment. In particular, they cited the parable, "The fathers ate sour grapes, and their children's teeth are set on edge."[85] Likewise, these people are afflicted by ignorance that is similar and related to that of the people we just mentioned. They insist that human souls existed and had their being before the formation of bodies. They further insist that souls willingly fell into sin even before their bodies existed and that they first became tied to these bodies when they received birth in the flesh as a punishment.[86] But in one short statement, Christ did away with the folly of both groups by maintaining that neither the blind man nor his parents sinned. He overturns the dogma of the Jews when he says that it was not because of anyone's sin—either his own or his forebears' or even his father's or mother's—that the man was born blind, and he likewise topples the stupid nonsense of the others, who say that souls sin even before the existence of their bodies.

After all, someone could quite reasonably say to them: How, tell me, does Christ say that neither the blind man nor his parents sinned? We could not grant that they are completely pure when it comes to sin. It is surely likely, or rather necessary, that since they are human, they stumble and fall. What time, then, is Christ referring to in which his statement that "neither he nor his parents sinned" will prove to be true? Well, it is clear that **[138]** he is talking about the time before birth in which they did not sin because they did not exist at all.

Now concerning these matters, we have already gone through a long discussion of how truly frivolous and foolish it is to think that souls sinned before the existence of bodies and that is why they were embodied and arrived in this world. We undertook this at the beginning of the present Gospel in interpreting and contemplating the statement, "He was the true light, which enlightens everyone coming into the world,"[87] and it would take us off track to go through these issues again. We should,

[85]Ezek 18:2.

[86]The opponents in view here are the Origenists. See vol. 1, p. 51 n. 237.

[87]Jn 1:9. See vol. 1, pp. 48-57.

however, discuss where the Jews got this idea (or conjecture) and clearly demonstrate that they were led astray from proper thinking because they were not able to understand the divine word.

Israel once dwelt in tents in the desert, and God called the holy teacher Moses to Mount Sinai. But when he extended his stay there with God to forty days, the people thought he was a loiterer. They rose up against Aaron, who was now alone, and because of their negligence fell into the false worship of Egypt. They cried out, "Make gods for us, who will go before us. As for this fellow Moses, who led us out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him."[88] What happened next, I think we should discuss briefly. "They made a calf," as it is written,[89] and God was justly enraged by this. Next he threatened to destroy the entire assembly at once. Moses fell down before him and sought pardon with much prayer. The creator of all granted forgiveness and promised not to punish the people except that he would not go up with them to the promised land but would send his angel with them as their leader. **[139]** Moses could not bear this. Because God did not want to go up with the people, he quite reasonably inferred that God's anger had not yet completely subsided. So he prayed again earnestly that the Lord would accompany them, knowing that the mere guidance of an angel would not be enough for the Israelites. Perhaps he also feared the weakness of the people and was therefore averting the holy angel's hatred of wickedness while asking the good and loving Lord and supreme king of all to be with them instead, since they were liable to stumble. That is because he knew that the Lord would pardon them not once, but many times, and grant mercy to those who would offend him. And God consented to this as well. Then Moses asked for a sign from him as a clear confirmation and proof that he had completely forgiven them: he asked to see him. "If I have found favor with you," he says, "show yourself to me that I may see you clearly, that I may find favor in your sight and know that this great nation is your people."[90] God did this too, as far as possible, thus giving his servant every assurance that he had forgiven the sin of the people and that he would go up with them to the promised land. But something was still missing. So he then put the finishing touches on his promises, as it were, commanding Moses to carve out two other tablets (since the original ones were obviously broken in pieces) in order for God to inscribe the law on them for the people once again, thereby furnishing no small proof of his kindness toward them. And when Moses was ready for this, "The Lord descended in a cloud," as it is written, "and stood with him there, and **[140]** proclaimed the name of the Lord. The Lord passed before him and proclaimed, 'The Lord God, compassionate and merciful, long-suffering and abundant in mercy and true, preserving righteousness and showing mercy to thousands, taking away iniquities, unrighteousness and sins. He will not clear the guilty but will visit the sins of the fathers on the children and the children's children to the third and fourth generation.'"[91]

Now pay careful attention, and I will take up the original question once again. God insists that kindness and incomparable love for humanity are his divine qualities. We maintain that this statement was made by him, not by someone else, and not (as some think) by the all-wise Moses as he was offering up thankful prayers on behalf of the people. None other than the blessed Moses himself testifies to us that the Lord of all is the one saying these things about himself. Moses teaches this in the

[88]Ex 32:1.
[89]Acts 7:41.
[90]Ex 33:13.
[91]Ex 34:5-7.

book of Numbers, when Israel suddenly lost its nerve because some, who were sent by Moses at the command of the Lord to spy out the land, spoke evil of the promised land. When they returned from the land of the foreigners and came again to their own people, they spat out bitter words about that land. They said the land was so wild and rugged that it could eat up its inhabitants, and they filled their hearers with such foreboding that, with tears streaming down their faces, they wanted to return to Egypt with all its hardships. "Let us appoint captains," they said, "and go back to Egypt."[92] And when God threatened to destroy them, Moses prayed again. In effect he was reminding God of the promise he had given him when he stepped forward and cried out, "And **[141]** now let your power be exalted, O Lord, in the way you described when you said, 'The Lord, long-suffering and abundant in mercy and true, taking away iniquities, unrighteousness and sins. He will by no means clear the guilty, but will visit the sins of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generation.' Forgive the sins of this people according to your great mercy, just as you have been favorable toward them from Egypt until now."[93] It is clear, then, that he who is God over all testifies to his own love for humanity and his extreme forbearance. It would be fitting next to mention the reason why the Jews went astray and thought that our good God bears grudges and is severely wrathful.

Now I, at least, do not think they are at all capable of understanding the divine oracles, and neither are they able to find fault on the grounds that the oracles are not excellent but stray far from the law of fairness. It is only a result of their own ignorance that they suppose that the sins of parents are actually visited upon children and that God's wrath extends so far that it reaches the third and fourth generation, unjustly punishing the innocent for the sins of others. After all, would not any who are wise have to think, as is fitting, that the source of righteousness and morality would not do such a shameful thing? Humans impose the penalties of the law on those whose practice is to break the law, not on their children, unless they happen to be caught as partners and participants in their crimes. So as for him who defined for us the laws of all justice, **[142]** how could he be caught imposing penalties that are roundly condemned even among us?

Next, we should also investigate the following. He gave countless laws through Moses, and he often ordered that those who had an unholy way of life should be punished. But nowhere do we see him ordering that their children share the penalty for their sins. The penalty was for those who were caught, and punishment was appropriately decreed only for those who broke the law. Therefore, it is impious to think like the Jews; instead, whoever is wise should probe the divine mind and in every way uphold what is agreeable to nature, the queen of all things. Rightly let us hold, then, that the God of all, who drew attention to his gentleness and wished to be admired for his sheer love of the human race, and who for this reason cried out, "The Lord, long-suffering and abundant in mercy and true, taking away iniquities and sins"—this God did not wish to be known for bearing such a grudge that his wrath sails on to the fourth generation. How would he still be long-suffering and abundant in mercy, or how would he still take away iniquities and sins, if he cannot stand to make the size of the punishment fit the person of the sinner but extends it beyond the third generation and strikes the innocent like some kind of thunderbolt?[94] It is quite incredible, therefore,

[92]Num 14:4.
[93]Num 14:17-19.

[94]Cyril's reference to the "thunderbolt" implies that his opponents are describing God as if he were more like Zeus than the God of the Bible.

and not far from complete idiocy to think that God attributes to himself love and gentleness toward humanity and, at the same time, such immense irrational anger.

But there is another point that could be made by those who think in a Jewish manner and do not concede that God knows the proper time for every action: **[143]** if he promises to be long-suffering and attributes to himself a willingness to lay down his anger quite readily, then why do we see him adding, "visiting the sins of the father on the children to the third and fourth generation"?[95] After all, there was no other reason for doing this than a wish to intimidate those who were looking to receive forgiveness of sins from him. He is saying they will never get what they hope for since he, who is upset with them for good reason, bears such a grudge and has such intense anger.

Now what do you suppose Moses himself, the teacher, says to us? Does he not seem to act contrary to all reason if, when Israel had caused offense and was about to be punished, he proceeded to pray for them, and as he was asking God to forget their sins and show his love for the human race, he ineptly said to God, You are of such a nature as to pay back the children's children for the sins of their fathers? This would be a way of instigating to anger rather than calling for mercy and asking for a grudge rather than for patience. No, I think he intended to be persistent with these words and almost to remind God of what he himself had uttered when he proclaimed his goodness to him. Now, as to how he is long-suffering and abundant in mercy, and how he takes away iniquities and sins, that will be most clearly recognized in those cases where he seems to be harsh.

Therefore, I think it is fitting to discuss next how we should understand the words that were spoken by God. "The Lord," he says, "long-suffering and abundant in mercy, taking away iniquities and sins."[96] Then the next part we will read with a question mark: "Will not God surely clear the guilty?"[97] So you should understand it to mean something like this: "God," he says, "who is long-suffering **[144]** and abundant in mercy, who takes away iniquities and sins—will he not surely clear the guilty?" There is no doubt. He will surely clear the guilty, since how can he be long-suffering and abundant in mercy, and how can he take away sins at all, if he does not clear the guilty? He then goes on an excursus on this point to demonstrate his forbearance and patience by the fact that he will place the sins of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generation. He does not punish the son instead of the father—do not think that!—nor does he impose the sins of the ancestors on their descendant like some kind of burden. Rather, it means something like the following:

There was a certain man, let's say, who was a transgressor, whose mind was full of every kind of wickedness. Now anyone caught living this way deserves to be punished without delay. Nevertheless, God, who is patient, put up with him and did not bring down upon him the wrath that he deserved. Then he had a son who rivaled his father's depravity and outstripped his parent in doing evil. And God was patient with him as well. Then from him was born a third, and from the third a fourth, not at all inferior to their fathers in wickedness, but practicing impiety equal to theirs. Finally, God visits his wrath upon them, which the whole clan deserved from the beginning, after tolerating as much as, or rather more than, was fitting. Now this delay of punishment to the fourth generation—how could this not be a commendation of truly God-befitting gentleness?

It is not hard to learn that he does not

[95]Num 14:8.

[96]Ex 34:6-7.

[97]In Greek, the only difference between the statement "He will by no means clear the guilty" and the question "Will he not surely clear the guilty?" is the punctuation mark.

punish the son for the father or the father for the son. This comes from the words he spoke through the voice of the prophet Ezekiel to the Jews themselves, who were grumbling about this very issue **[145]** and saying, "The fathers ate sour grapes and their children's teeth are set on edge." It says, "And the word of the Lord came to me and said, 'Son of man, what do you people mean by this proverb in Israel when you say: The fathers ate sour grapes and their children's teeth are set on edge? As I live, declares the Lord, this proverb will no more be spoken in Israel. All souls are mine. The soul of the father just as the soul of the son is mine. The soul who sins is the one who will die. The son will not bear the iniquity of the father, nor will the father bear the iniquity of the son. Each one will die for the iniquity of his own sin.'"[98] I do not think anyone is so foolish as to think that God did not give excellent laws in the beginning but somehow changed his mind and his views for the better, like one of us who, upon further deliberation, can somehow manage to decree more suitable laws. If we praise the former laws, we will, with that praise, obviously accuse the latter. But if we give the victory to the latter, we will have to charge the former with inferiority. Thus God will contradict himself with his laws, and so he has failed to meet the standard of what is right, just like we do, since he has decreed one thing at one time and something else at another time. But I think everyone will say that the divine nature could never be subject to the aforementioned absurdities, and neither could it ever fail to meet the standard of what is right.

Therefore, he includes this statement as a proof of his sheer generosity. (I am referring to the statement about paying back the children for the sins of the fathers to the third and fourth generation.) It is the character of God (who loves the human race) not to punish offenders immediately but to wait and to put off the punishment for a long time. You can see this when he says, **[146]** "I am filled with my wrath, and I restrained it; I did not wipe them out."[99] Again, somewhere else he says, "The sin of the Amorites is not yet complete."[100] You see how he was full of anger because some were committing acts deserving of the ultimate anger, but as God he put up with them and delayed wiping out those who offended him. In order to convince you by the actual events, however, and to impress upon you once again the proof of what we have said (namely, that the passage is a commendation of God's love for humanity), I will bring forward some passages in the Scriptures, and I will try to prove from the divine Scriptures themselves that the sins of the fathers were brought upon the children to the third and fourth generation not unjustly but justly, and that those who suffered this deserved it. Due to the length of the narrative, I will summarize it.

In the third book of Kings,[101] we read that after other kings, Ahab reigned over Israel. He fell into a wicked desire for a vineyard that did not belong to him, so he killed the master of the vineyard, I mean Naboth. (He himself did not order this to be done, but he expressed no anger at the wickedness of his wife.) Of course, God grew angry about this, and he said to him through the prophet Elijah, "Thus says the Lord, 'Because you have killed and taken possession, therefore,' says the Lord, 'in the place where the swine and the dogs licked up the blood of Naboth, there the dogs will lick up your blood and the harlots will wash themselves in your blood.'"[102] And then right after that, "Thus says the Lord: 'Behold, I am

[98]Ezek 18:1-4, 24.

[99]Jer 6:11 (LXX).

[100]Gen 15:16.

[101]The Septuagint contains 1 Kings, 2 Kings, 3 Kings and 4 Kings. These four books correspond to what English Bibles refer to as 1 Samuel, 2 Samuel, 1 Kings and 2 Kings, in that order. Thus Cyril is referring to what we know as 1 Kings.

[102]1 Kings 21:19 (3 Kings 20:19 LXX).

bringing disaster on you, and I will kindle a fire behind you, and I will wipe out from Ahab **[147]** every male, him who is shut up and him who is left in Israel. And I will make your house like the house of Jeroboam son of Nebat and the house of Baasha son of Ahab for the provocations by which you provoked me to anger and caused Israel to sin.' Then he said of Jezebel, 'The dogs will eat her within the outer wall of Israel. And anyone belonging to Ahab who dies in the city, the dogs will eat. And any who dies in the field, the birds of heaven will eat.'"[103] When the Lord of all unmistakably threatened to do all these things and to inflict them, Ahab tore his clothes and went into his house, as it is written, pierced with sorrow, and he broke down in bitter tears and girded his loins with sackcloth.[104] Then God takes pity on him in this condition. He begins to curtail his anger and putting a bridle, as it were, on his sudden wrath, he says to the prophet, "Do you see how Ahab is pierced with sorrow before me? I will not inflict these punishments in his days, but I will inflict disaster in the days of his son."[105]

Should we not, then, examine who received the fulfillment of this? Now Ozias[106] was born to Ahab, and he "did evil," it says, "before the Lord and walked in the way of his father Ahab and in the way of Jezebel his mother."[107] And then Joram was born to Ozias, it says.[108] Concerning him, it is written that "he walked in the sins of the house of Jeroboam."[109] Next, a third-generation Ochozias, the son of Joram, reigned.[110] Of him the narrative says that "he did evil before the Lord, just like the house of Ahab."[111] Since the time was now at hand to punish the house of Ahab, which had not stopped sinning against God even to the fourth generation, **[148]** Jehoshaphat son of Nimshi was anointed king over Israel.[112] He kills Ochozias and Jezebel along with him. He also kills seventy other sons of Ahab, carrying out the divine wrath to its limit, as it were, and gaining honor and favor because of it. What does God say to him? "Because you have done well in carrying out what is right in my eyes and you have done to the house of Ahab everything that was in my heart, your sons of the fourth generation will sit upon your throne."[113] Notice how he reluctantly punishes the wicked descendants of the wicked in the fourth generation, but for the one who honored him, he extends mercy to the fourth generation. Stop then, O Jew, from accusing the righteousness of God! We should take the passage as a form of encomium when it speaks of paying back the children for the sins of the fathers to the third and fourth generation.

"So that God's works might be revealed in him."

The passage before us is rather hard to explain and quite confusing. It might be a good idea to pass over it and leave it alone because of its excessive difficulty. But now that the Jewish

[103]1 Kings 21:23-24 (3 Kings 20:23-24 LXX).

[104]1 Kings 21:27 (3 Kings 20:27 LXX).

[105]1 Kings 21:29 (3 Kings 20:29 LXX).

[106]The name *Ozias* is found in neither the Hebrew text nor the Septuagint. The Hebrew text names the son Ahaziah, and the Septuagint names him Ochozias. There is, however, one manuscript of Cyril that calls him Ochozias (see Pusey 4:147 n. 20).

[107]1 Kings 22:52 (3 Kings 22:53 LXX).

[108]According to both the Hebrew text and the Septuagint, Joram (or Jehoram in Hebrew) is Ozias's brother, not his son. See 2 Kings 1:17 (4 Kings 1:18 LXX).

[109]2 Kings 3:3 (4 Kings 1:18 LXX).

[110]Literally, a "third Ochozias." This seems to indicate that he is a third-generation son from the original Ochozias (Ozias), thus putting him in the fourth generation from Ahab (in Cyril's reckoning). In the Hebrew text, this king is named Ahaziah and is the son of Jehoram of Judah, not Joram of Israel, though he is related to the house of Ahab. See 2 Kings 8:25-27 (4 Kings 8:25-27 LXX). The Septuagint identifies Ochozias simply as the "son of Joram," not specifying "of Judah," though it does note that he reigned in Jerusalem. Cyril seems to construe this Ochozias as a king of Israel, not Judah.

[111]2 Kings 8:27 (4 Kings 8:27 LXX).

[112]Both the Hebrew text and the Septuagint identify him as "Jehu son of Jehoshaphat son of Nimshi." See 2 Kings 9:2 (4 Kings 9:2 LXX).

[113]2 Kings 10:30 (4 Kings 10:30 LXX).

doctrines have been destroyed, we do not want to see another related error spring up and cause trouble like a "root of bitterness," as Paul says.[114] (After all, it is likely that some would suppose that human bodies are called to suffer so that God's works might be revealed in them.) Therefore, it seems profitable, at least to me, to say a few words about this in order to defend against the damage from this error and to leave no opening for deceptive arguments. Now we have already shown that God does not visit the sins of the parents upon the children (as long as they do not share in the parents' transgressions) and also that **[149]** embodiment is not the result of the sins of the soul before birth.[115] Christ rejected and demolished both views in a miraculous way because he knows all things as God, or rather because he is the dispenser of our affairs, and he distributes to each person what is fitting or deserved. By saying that the blind man had not sinned and that this was certainly not the reason he was suffering blindness, he shows that it is foolish to think that the human soul is held responsible for transgressions committed before the birth of the body. And by explicitly saying that the parents committed no transgression resulting in their son being born blind, he demolishes the silly opinion of the Jews. Next, after he taught the disciples what they needed to know to overturn the doctrines as we just explained, and after he bestowed upon them as much knowledge of the man as was fitting, he is silent about the rest. He does not go on to provide a clear reason why the man, who was guilty of no sin before birth, was born blind. Rather, he ascribes to the divine nature alone the exceptional knowledge and *oikonomia*[116] of all such things. But then he skillfully shifts his answer to a different topic and says, "but so that God's works might be revealed in him."

When the Lord says these things to us, someone will say, does he thereby teach as doctrine that it is only for this reason that suffering afflicts human bodies: "that God's works might be revealed" in them? That does not seem right to me at all. Rather, those who hold such a position or think this way are completely out of touch. When he says such things, he is not teaching doctrine at all, as some might think. After all, we have often learned from the Holy Scriptures that some are struck because of their sins. Paul, for example, clearly writes to those who dare to approach the divine altar with unwashed feet, as it were, **[150]** and lay hold of the mystical blessing with profane and unholy hands, "For this reason many of you are weak and ill, and many have died. But if we judged ourselves, we would not be judged. But when we are judged by the Lord, we are disciplined so that we may not be condemned along with the world."[117] Accordingly, for those who are sick or have died, their suffering has sometimes been imposed by divine wrath. Even our Lord Jesus Christ himself, when he had freed the paralytic from a long disease and had miraculously made him well, says, "See, you have been made well. Do not sin anymore so that nothing worse happens to you."[118] He says this because it could happen that if he did not watch out, he would suffer something worse for his sin, even though he had once escaped it and had been healed by the Lord's grace.

Well, perhaps we will grant that in this case, this explanation is right. But as for those who suffer something horrible from the cradle right after their birth as well as those who even from the womb are born with diseases, it is not easy to see what kind of explanation would fit these cases. We do not believe that the soul exists before the body, nor do we

[114]Heb 12:15. Cyril considered Paul to be the author of Hebrews.

[115]See p. 22. See also vol. 1, pp. 48-57.

[116]Here *oikonomia* does not refer to the incarnation but to God's arrangement of human affairs in general.

[117]1 Cor 11:30-32.

[118]Jn 5:14.

think that it sins before the body. After all, how could that which has not yet been called into existence sin? But if there is no sin or fault preceding the suffering, what will we then say is the reason for the suffering? Well, matters far above us are completely inaccessible to the contemplation of our minds, and I would advise the prudent to resist even the desire to look into them. That goes for me above all. We should instead think about what we have been commanded, and not search out what is too deep or investigate what is too difficult or rashly try to dig up what is hidden in the divine and ineffable counsel alone. Rather, we should reverently entrust to God alone the knowledge **[151]** of matters that are appropriate and distinctive to him, while holding the true belief that since he is the fountain of all righteousness, he would not do or intend anything either in our affairs or in those of the rest of all creation except what is clearly worthy of him and does not depart from what is true and right.

Therefore, since it is not unreasonable for us to have this attitude, I say that the Lord is not teaching doctrine when he says, "so that God's works might be revealed in him." Rather, he is diverting his answer to another road, as it were, and bringing it around from what is too deep for us to what is more fitting, since that was his custom. If you want to see that this is true, listen to how, when the holy disciples were eagerly inquiring about the end of the world and trying to pin down with the utmost precision the events related to his second coming, far surpassing the limits that are fitting for human beings, he distinctly sends them away from such questions and says, "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons which the Father has set by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea."[119]

[119]Acts 1:7-8.

You can hear how he does not allow us any glimpse into matters that are not appropriate for us but redirects us where we need to go. So also here, when he has told us clearly what we needed to know, he remains silent about the rest, knowing that it was fitting for him alone to understand this. However, lest complete silence serve as a kind of invitation for them to ask about the same things again, he says, as if he were giving a reason and fashioning an apt reply that the question deserved, "so that God's works might be revealed in him." This **[152]** is just as if he had said in different and simpler language, The man was not born blind because of his own sins or those of his parents, but once he happens to suffer this, God can be glorified in him. After all, when, by power from above, he is found to be free of the suffering that so troubled and afflicted him, who will not marvel at the physician? Who will not recognize the power of the healer in him?

I think this is the meaning of the passage. Let those who are wise think of a better meaning. But if any think they ought to argue about it and say that it was for this reason that the man was born blind—that Christ may be glorified in him—we will say to them, All right then, sirs, was he the only one in all Judea who was blind from birth at the time of our Savior's advent, and no one else was at all? I think they will admit, even if they do not want to, that there was quite probably a countless multitude of such people in the whole country. How is it, then, that Christ displayed his kindness only to one, or at least to a small number of others? Well, I think it is superfluous to argue about these issues at all. Therefore, we reject the first opinion as utterly silly, and we will hold as true that he revealed to us as much about the questions as we needed to know, and then he diverted the discussion to another topic, skillfully leading his disciples away from looking into these matters.

9:4 "We must do the works of him who sent us while it is still day; night is coming, when no one can work."

See, with these crystal-clear and gentle words, he is basically rebuking the disciples in another way for directing their attention where it should not be and for leaving the high road, **[153]** which is well worn and tested, to venture on a road (so to speak) that is unsuitable for them. Why do you ask, he says, about matters concerning which it is better to remain silent? Why do you leave behind what is fitting for the time you are in and rush to learn what is beyond human understanding? This is the time, he says, not for searching out these matters but for work and for intense zeal. I think you should rather put away your interest in these matters and rush to carry out what God has commanded. Since he made us apostles, we should do the work of apostleship.

Now when the Lord includes himself with those who are sent and numbers himself with those who ought to work, he certainly does not say these things because he is on our level or because he is one of us who by the necessities of servanthood are subject to the will of a commander. Rather, he is using a customary pattern of speech that we use constantly as well. When the statement is not intended to strike the hearers directly, we usually connect ourselves and include ourselves with them, just as of course when the most wise Paul was speaking to the Corinthians he added this conclusion about himself and Apollos: "I have applied these things, brothers, to myself and Apollos so that you may learn through us the meaning of the saying, 'Nothing beyond what is written.'"

So while it is day, he says, let us do the works of him who sent us. For night will come when no one can work. In these words, he calls the time of our life in the body "day" and the time in death "night." Since the day was given for work and the night for rest and sleep, people say that the time of life in which we ought to do good is "day," while the time of sleeping in which one can do no work at all is "night." "Whoever has died has been justified **[154]** from sin," as Paul says,[120] since they are unable to do anything and therefore unable to sin.

Now the divine Scripture certainly knows another meaning of a spiritual day, and to no less a degree a corresponding sense of night as well. When each of the meanings is received at the proper time, it lights the way to an error-free contemplation of the subject matter. But that same meaning when the time is not right—when one should not try to drag by force what ought to be read according to the narrative[121] into a spiritual interpretation—is nothing other than an unlearned confusion of what would be profitable if understood without elaborate interpretation. It is an obfuscation, due to deep ignorance, of what is beneficial from the passage.

9:5 "As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world."

Should we then think that Christ is not in the world at all? Do we believe that since he was taken up into heaven after his resurrection from the dead, he no longer dwells with those in this life? No, as true God, he fills and cares for not only the heavens and the firmament beyond the heavens but also our world. And just as he was not absent from the heavens when he lived with human beings in this world in the flesh, so also we will hold, if we think rightly, that even though he has gone out of the world on account of his flesh, his divine and ineffable nature will be no less present to everyone in the world. And it rules over everything, being absent from nothing, neither leaving behind anything that exists, but present everywhere to everything. It fills

[120] Rom 6:7.
[121] ἱστορικῶς.

the universe and whatever may be conceived of beyond the universe and is contained by itself alone.

The next task, then, is to see what the Lord is saying in these words. **[155]** He overturned the Jews' conjecture because it was stale, and he showed that they were senselessly entangled in unsound doctrines. He advised his disciples that it would be better to devote themselves to doing what pleases God and to give up the search for anything beyond that. Then he struck fear into their heart by warning that the time for works will slip away from those who do nothing unless they make every effort to be well pleasing while they are in the world in the flesh. Finally, he holds himself up as an example of this. See I too, he says, do the work that is appropriate for me. Since I came to enlighten what was in need of light, it is fitting for me to make light dwell even in the eyes of the body, if they are diseased with a terrible lack of light, especially when those suffering from this approach me.

Therefore, we will take the statement in a simple sense as it reads in the narrative.[122] After all, there is no doubt that the Only Begotten is also spiritual light, with the knowledge and power to illuminate not only what is in this world but also all the rest of creation beyond this world. So if we join the sense of the words to the spiritual meaning,[123] I do not think we will be caught doing anything that lacks credibility.

9:6-7 When he had said this, he spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva and spread the mud on the man's eyes and said to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which means Sent). Then he went and washed and came back able to see.

We will take the healing of this blind man as a type for the calling of the Gentiles, and we will explain the meaning of the mystery, summing it up in a few words. **[156]** First, he saw the blind man in passing as he was leaving the Jewish temple. Next, the Savior came to a decision to heal the man by his own desire to help him and by his own self-invitation, without any request and without anyone asking him. For these reasons, we will profitably take the healing as a kind of sign that when there was no request from the multitude of the Gentiles (since they were all in error), God, who is good by nature, invited himself, so to speak, to come and have mercy on them. How, after all, or in what way could the vast number of Greeks or Gentiles have sought mercy from God, since their mind was submerged in sheer ignorance so that they could not see the illuminator at all? Therefore, just as the blind man who is healed certainly does not know Jesus, but by Jesus' mercy and love he obtains more than he hoped for, so also through Christ, the Gentiles possessed more than they hoped for as well.

And the healing was accomplished on the sabbath, so the sabbath can thereby serve as a type for us of the end time of the present age, in which the Savior made light shine on the Gentiles. After all, the sabbath is the end of the week, and the Only Begotten dwelt with and was manifested to us all in the last hour and in the end times of the age. We should truly be astonished at the manner of the healing and say, "How great are your works, O Lord! In wisdom you have done them all."[124]

Perhaps someone will ask, Why, when he can easily set all things right by a word, does he make mud out of his saliva, **[157]** spread it on the eyes of the sufferer and command him

[122]"As it reads in the narrative" translates the Greek word ἱστορικώτερον. Cyril often contrasts a "narrative" or "historical" reading with a spiritual one. In this case, "I am the light of the world" understood in the narrative sense means that Jesus gives sight to the blind, because that is what the narrative is about. But understood spiritually, it means that Jesus enlightens all creation with a spiritual light.

[123]θεωρία. Cyril seems concerned that the reader might object to him taking the passage literally.

[124]Ps 104:24 (Ps 103:24 LXX).

to do something (since he says, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam")? Well, I think there is a deep meaning buried in these words, since the Savior does nothing in vain. By smearing him with mud, he supplies what is lacking, so to speak, and failing in the nature of the eye, and thereby he shows that he is the one who formed us in the beginning, the creator and fashioner of all. But the power of the action contains a mystical meaning as well. So now we will explain what we have to say about that and how we think it should be understood.

There was no other way for the Gentiles to fend off the blindness that had afflicted them and to behold the divine and holy light, that is, to receive knowledge of the holy and consubstantial Trinity, except to become partakers of his holy flesh and to wash away the sin that darkens them and to strip off the authority of the devil, namely through holy baptism. When the Savior engraved the anticipatory type of the mystery upon the blind man, he brought about the power of a kind of participation by anointing him with saliva. As an image of holy baptism, he commands the man to run and wash in Siloam, a name whose interpretation the very wise and Spirit-bearing Evangelist feels it necessary to give. We conclude that the "sent one" is none other than the only begotten God, who was sent by the Father and visited us from above to destroy sin and the violence of the devil. We recognize that he swims invisibly in the waters of the holy pool, and we are washed with faith, not for the removal of dirt **[158]** from the body, as it is written,[125] but we wash away the defilement and impurity of the eyes of the mind, as it were, so that we may be able to be pure and to gaze purely at the divine beauty.

Therefore, just as we believe that the body of Christ is life giving, since it is the temple and dwelling place of the living Word of God and possesses all his energy, so also we say that it supplies illumination, since it is the body of the one who is the true light by nature. When he raised the only begotten son of the widow from the dead, it was not enough for him merely to give the order and say, "Young man, I say to you arise,"[126] even though he ordinarily accomplished whatever he wanted by a word, but he placed his hand on the bier, showing that even his body has life-giving energy. So also here, he smears saliva on the man, teaching that his body is the supplier of illumination even with a mere touch. That is because it is the body of the true light, as we have said.

Next the blind man went away and quickly washed himself and without delay did what he was told, showing in himself the ready obedience of the Gentiles about whom it is written, "He inclined his ear to the preparation of their heart."[127] So the wretched Jews are hard-hearted, but the Gentiles are completely docile in obedience, and they bear witness to the fact by their actions. The man immediately removes his blindness, washing it away with the mud, and returns "seeing." It was not possible, after all, for things to turn out other than the way Christ decreed them. Faith, therefore, is noble and strengthens the God-given grace in us, while double-mindedness is harmful. "For **[159]** the double-minded man is unstable in all his ways," as it is written, and will receive nothing at all from the Lord.[128]

9:8-9 The neighbors and those who had seen him before as a beggar began to ask, "Is not this the man who used to sit and beg?" Someone else said, "No, but it is someone like him." He replied, "I am he."

Such surpassing wonders are hard to believe. That which is [beyond human experience][129] is difficult to understand, and even when people

[125]1 Pet 3:21.

[126]Lk 7:14.

[127]Ps 10:17 (Ps 9:38 LXX).

[128]Jas 1:8, 7.

[129]There seems to be something missing in the manuscript here. See Pusey 4:159 n. 9.

receive such wonders into their minds in simplicity, they only just barely give them sufficient esteem. After all, trying to undertake an exacting examination of what is surely beyond the human mind and reason is almost silly. I think that is the reason for the unbelief of some who previously saw the blind man sitting at the crossroads and were later astonished when he appeared before them unexpectedly with clear eyes. And they are divided due to uncertainty about what had happened. The one group, examining carefully the greatness of the deed, says that he is not the same man but rather someone bearing a great resemblance to the man they know. (Really, it is not surprising that some, in trying to avoid the truth, are driven against their will into a false explanation, so to speak, by the magnitude of the sign from God.) Others free their mind from their well-known procrastination. In reverence and fear, they acknowledge the miracle and say that he is the same man. The man who had been healed immediately settles the question, offering his own account, which is the most credible account possible when it comes to oneself. People are not ignorant of themselves, after all, even if they are delirious from illness. So in every way **[160]** the miracle, even though it is distrusted because of its surpassing power, testifies that the miracle worker should be seen as great.

9:10 They asked him, "How were your eyes opened?"

With difficulty, they consent to believe that he is the same man whom they knew before. They give up their hesitation on this point and ask him how he got rid of his blindness and how this event beyond hope took place. It is normal, after all, for those who are amazed to make a careful investigation and to investigate how the deeds were done. And they decided to do the same, not without God's guidance, it seems to me, but so that they might learn the power of our Savior, even if they do not want to, from the description and clear proclamation of the blind man. This you may take as a beautiful image of the Gentile converts becoming teachers of the Israelites, after escaping from their ancient blindness and obtaining illumination from Christ our Savior through the Spirit. The events themselves cry out that what I say is true.

9:11 He answered, "A man called Jesus made mud, spread it on my eyes, and said to me, 'Go to Siloam and wash.' Then I went and washed and received my sight."

He still seems to be ignorant that the Savior is God by nature. Otherwise he would not have spoken of him so unfittingly. He probably thought of him as a holy man, most likely taking this view from an indistinct report that was spreading through all Jerusalem and from the gossip **[161]** that was repeated everywhere about him. We may observe that those who have physical afflictions and struggle with extreme poverty have very little interest in making the acquaintance of others, since their unmitigated poverty exhausts their whole mind, as it were. So he simply calls him a "man" and describes how the healing took place. He must surely have been convinced that he should give glory exceeding that of human nature to the miracle worker, but since he believed that saints could do miracles by God's power, he was probably caught up in thinking that Jesus was one of them.

9:12 And they said to him, "Where is he?" He said, "I do not know."

They are not looking for Jesus with devout intentions, and neither are they eager to learn where and with whom he is talking so that they might go and seek some profit from his activities. Rather, the eyes of their understanding were blinded far worse than he who was once

blind in the eyes of his body. They are inflamed by the most unrighteous anger and pounce like wild beasts, thinking that our Savior broke a commandment of the law, namely, the one that forbids doing any work whatsoever on the sabbath. They rage without measure because he actually dared to take hold of some dirt and rub it around with his finger, and in addition to this, he ordered the man to wash himself on the sabbath. That is why they spit out the angry and senseless words, "Where is he?" **[162]** without asking to be excused for speaking rudely. Out of pettiness, they heap abuse on him who rightly deserved rich honor, though they ought to have admired him if they were good and knew how to crown the power of God with fitting praises. Because of the limitless evil of their intentions, they thrust aside what I think they should have thought and done, and they follow their misplaced fervor. They falsely imagine that they need to stand up for the law, which had somehow been violated, so they ask for Jesus on the grounds that he had worked on the sabbath and violated the excellent commandment by healing the man. I suppose they probably think that God is harsh and pitiless on the sabbath and that he is very angry when he sees a man healed—a man who was created in his image and likeness and for whom the sabbath was made. "For the son of man is Lord of the sabbath," as the Savior says.[130]

9:13-14 They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. Now it was a sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes.

They bring the man to the rulers not to learn what happened to him and admire it (since it is unlikely that those who exude pure envy against Christ our Savior could ever be pleased by such things), but to establish proof of his transgression, so they thought, and to accuse him of wrongdoing because he made mud on the sabbath. They spurn admiration of the miracle and lay hold of the deed as a transgression, exhibiting the man on whom he had dared to perform the miracle as proof of what had been done. **[163]** At the same time, they think they will achieve for themselves a reputation for piety in Jewish customs, and they proceed to strain the commandment of the law to its limit. In Deuteronomy, the one who is by nature true God teaches the mind of the pious that they must not be drawn aside to another or think that there are any other gods besides him, but he commands them to serve only the true God and to hate bitterly those who dare to advise them to think any other way. He says, "If your brother, your father's son or your mother's son, or your own son or daughter, or your wife whom you embrace, or your friend who is equal to your own soul secretly advises you saying, 'Let us go and worship other gods,' do not consent, do not listen to them, do not spare them, do not show them pity and do not shelter them. You shall surely report the matter concerning them."[131] And the Jews, looking only at the faults of others and ignorantly taking the decree concerning one act to apply to all, brought to their leaders those who were caught in any violation of the law, thinking that they were thereby honoring the lawgiver. That is the reason, I think, they asked about Jesus, saying, "Where is he?"[132] And when they cannot find him anywhere, they do the next best thing: they bring the man on whom the miracle was performed so that he may seal with his own voice, as it were, the breaking of the law committed by the one who had healed him on the sabbath.

After the blessed Evangelist has made clear to us that they are upset beyond measure over

[130]Mt 12:8. Cyril seems to construe "son of man" as a reference to humans in general rather than to Jesus specifically.

[131]Deut 13:6, 8-9.

[132]Jn 9:12.

the making of mud on the sabbath, he appropriately indicates the absurdity of the situation **[164]** by adding, "Now it was a sabbath day when Jesus made the mud."

9:15 Next the Pharisees asked him, "How did you receive your sight?"

They busy themselves with the manner of the healing as they kindle the fire of malice that is in them to a greater heat, as it were. They ask superfluous questions even though they are not unaware of the miracle, it seems to me. Would it not be completely absurd for those who brought the formerly blind man to meet the Pharisees to remain completely silent about the reason for bringing him? But as if those people were not sufficient to bring the accusation against Christ, they force the man to confess in his own words what had been done, thinking that the false accusation would be more powerful that way. Notice how they do not simply ask if he had been healed, but they want to hear how he received his sight. This is what they particularly wanted to hear: "He made mud and spread it on my eyes." That is because they ignorantly supposed that the transgression of the law lay entirely in this. And since in their view the laws from above had been violated, they thought they were right to be angry and to demand that the one who upset them must be punished.

He said to them, "He put mud on my eyes. Then I washed, and now I see."

They eagerly receive his confession of the miracle as a sort of food for their envy, and they gladly seize upon it as an excuse for their fury against Jesus. The man who had been disabled explains straightforwardly everything that happened. He speaks very curtly, praising his physician in short confessions, as it were, since he is **[165]** a bit dumbfounded at the nature of the deed. He probably thought that Jesus miraculously made him see by spreading an unusual medicine, mud, on him. I think his statement was highly significant and pointed when he said, "He made mud and spread it on my eyes." It was as if one were to suppose he said, I know that I am speaking to a malicious audience, but I will not hide the truth. I will repay my benefactor with thanksgiving. I will rise above inappropriate silence. I will honor my physician by confessing him. He did not inflict an elaborate medical procedure on me. He did not perform the operation with a knife and cutting, and neither did he prepare the needed cure with a rich cocktail of drugs or apply any normal method, but he exercised his power with strange devices. "He made mud and spread it on my eyes. Then I washed, and now I see."[133]

One would be quite right to admire the man for adding as a kind of flourish to his report of these events, "Now I see." With this he is practically saying, I will show you that the power of the healer was not in vain. I will not deny his grace. Now I possess what I once longed for. I, he says, who was blind from birth and afflicted as a fetus in the womb, was healed by being anointed with mud, and now I see. That is, I do not merely show you my eye opened yet concealing darkness in its depth, but I really see. I can finally see the things I could only hear about before. Look! The bright light of the sun is shining around me. Look! The beauty of strange sights surrounds my eyes. Just a little while ago, I barely **[166]** knew what Jerusalem was like, but "now I see" the holy temple gleaming in the city. I see the truly awe-inspiring altar in the middle of it. And if I were outside the gate, I would look around all of Judea and would recognize one thing as a hill and another as a tree. When evening comes, the beauteous wonders of the sky—the bright choir of the stars and the golden light of the moon—will no longer

[133]The wording of this sentence is different from the wording of the lemma. It is possible that Cyril is paraphrasing at this point.

escape my eyes. Because of this, I will be astounded at the skill of him who made them, and from the beauty of creation, I will recognize the creator.[134]

So when it comes to the breadth of his ideas and the refinement of his speech, what he said is pregnant with some meaning like this. (I am referring to his statement, "Now I see," and, "He made mud and spread it on my eyes.") After all, the style of speech that we use (that is, the churchly style) does not rule out elegant ideas or reject them as spurious. So then, he who had received mercy from Christ, when questioned by the priests, says these things with integrity to uphold the genuine power of the healer as best he can.

9:16 Some of the Pharisees said, "This man is not from God, for he does not observe the sabbath."

They foolishly say that he who can do divine actions "is not from God." And when they see the Son crowned with a measure of glory equal to that of the almighty Father, they are not ashamed in their insanity to throw the charge of impiety at him. Disregarding the report of the miracle, they trot out their own envy against the miracle worker instead, and they negligently accuse him who knew no sin[135] of being a transgressor. **[167]** They ignorantly believe that daring to move one finger on the sabbath breaks the whole law, though they themselves untie their ox from the manger and lead it to water.[136] And if their sheep should fall into a pit, as it is written, they would lift it out with all haste.[137] Thus, they "strain out the gnat," as the Savior says,[138] since this was their common practice. In utter senselessness and desperation, they refuse to give credit to Christ for the miracle, and neither from the work of healing do they allow themselves to recognize him for who he is, but they quibble about the sabbath. As though, in their view, the entire observance of virtue consists only in being idle on the sabbath, they completely deny his relationship to God, saying that he is "not from God." Instead they should have understood that the one who is now before them has authority over his own laws and that it is pleasing and acceptable to God to do good even on the sabbath and not to leave someone hopeless who needs mercy. After all, when should someone refrain from praising the one who does good? What set time can tyrannize virtue? Although they admire the ancient hero Joshua, who took Jericho on the sabbath[139] and commanded their fathers to do what victors normally do—and who himself took almost no required rest at all on the sabbath—they persistently attack Christ and, because of their ill will, they strive to strip him not only of God-befitting glory, but they rob him of the honor due the saints as well. They are stirred up by their malice alone to make utterly random claims, and they pour the charge of impiety on him who justifies the world and who came to us from the Father for this very reason. **[168]**

But others said, "How can a man who is a sinner perform such signs?" And they were divided.

Even these think little of Christ, speaking and reasoning as if he were a mere man, except that they are convinced by the miracle and give the victory to Christ rather than the law. Since they place the proof afforded by the divine sign over the sabbath rest on this occasion, they appear in a better light as just judges. But how is it not in stark opposition to the sabbath decrees to excuse him completely from transgression and consider him free from sin when

[134]Wis 13:5.
[135]2 Cor 5:21.
[136]Lk 13:15.
[137]Mt 12:11.
[138]Mt 23:24.
[139]Josh 6:15.

he does not hesitate to do whatever seems right to him on the sabbath? They reach their conclusion by reasoning that seems inescapable and has a lot of common sense in it. It goes something like this: Now it is clear and everyone agrees without hesitation that God would never give the power to perform anything wonderful to those who neglect the divine law and who set at naught the decrees from above. Nevertheless, as the Jews think, he gave this power to Christ even though he violated the sabbath law. So doing something on the sabbath does not necessarily involve sin, and no one would doubt that doing good is far better than remaining idle on the sabbath. Indeed, as the Savior himself says somewhere, the Levites are permitted to serve as priests on the sabbath. They carry out their earnest tasks on that day without blame.[140] In fact, being idle would not be without blame. Who would blame them **[169]** if they are caught sacrificing oxen or performing other kinds of sacrifices on the sabbath? Instead, one would probably blame them if they did not do their duty and fulfill the requirements of the laws of worship. Therefore, since there is no prohibition against bringing to the divine altar, even on the sabbath, items that are dedicated according to the law to the salvation of certain people, how could it not be even more fitting for grace to be given to a man, for whose sake the miracle is acceptable even on the sabbath? Sound reasoning, then, summoned some of the Jews to render excellent judgments. With effort, they clear the eyes of their mind by removing the mist of ignorance that characterizes their nation, and they marvel at the glory of the Savior (even though they are not yet completely correct since they speak of him in more lowly terms than they should), and they separate themselves from those who are eager to condemn him. The one group disgracefully yields to envy rather than right reasoning and treats an act that is unimpeachable as a transgression. The other group views the nature of the act correctly and condemns the foolishness of the first group.

Now it is certainly possible that something else led them to say, "How can a man who is a sinner perform such signs?" They are eager to contend for the standards, so to speak, governing holy people. If we grant that it is at all possible, they say, for habitual transgressors to exalt themselves with extraordinary deeds and to be seen performing miracles, what would then prevent those who love to find fault from bringing accusations against the multitude of the prophets or even from attacking the blessed Moses himself and to hold such an august person in low esteem, even though the greatest of all deeds testify on his behalf? So they are actually advocating for the glory of the fathers, which is at stake in Christ, and they take his case as a kind of pretext for displaying their love for them. **[170]**

9:17 So they said again to the blind man, "What do you say about him? It was your eyes he opened."

They think that those who are committed to judging rightly are out of their mind. They seem to me to have completely forgotten him who says, "Judge with a right judgment."[141] They are taken captive in the chains of envy, as it were, and they cannot bear to listen to any words at all that honor Christ. They turn away from anyone who wants to speak of his miracles as though that person were utterly hostile to them, and, after disparaging their own head, they haughtily address their words to the man who had been healed. Again they ask him what he had told them many times, after putting forward their view that someone who does anything on the sabbath is a bad person and a sinner. By this they think the

[140]Mt 12:5.

[141]See Deut 1:16.

blind man will join them in condemning him and fall in line with their statements about him. They think he will conceal his prayers of thanksgiving for deliverance from suffering, shudder in fear because of their anger and readily accuse him of violating the law because it was the sabbath.

So the Pharisees' train of thought was wicked, and there is no doubt that it was ignorant. After all, how could the voice of one thankless man have weakened the power of the miracle? Or how would Christ seem to lack God-befitting glory just because the blind man happened to be overcome by fear and denied the gift while trying to avoid suffering at the hands of those who routinely inflict it? Envy has a terrible power to persuade those who are bursting with it to rush into any action with fervor, even if that action is open to much ridicule. The mind that is freed from such things, however, avoids ignorant arguments. It always preserves its own pristine beauty as it is brought immediately to what is fitting, and **[171]** it does not go beyond the limits of the truth. The Pharisees are petty and arrogant. They imagine that those who were caught thinking and speaking rightly are out of their mind, and they try to coerce the man to speak dishonestly about the one who miraculously called him to a condition beyond his hopes. He was ready to give thanks, however, and he had gotten close to a clear understanding because of the miracle.

He said, "He is a prophet."

They take a sharp arrow to the heart, as they do not put up with sound and fair reasoning but are eager to track down only what flatters their envy. "For the treacherous do not catch their game," as it is written.[142] Contrary to their expectations, their plans are upset and their hopes are dashed when they unexpectedly hear, "He is a prophet." The man who had been healed thinks rightly and agrees with the other party. That party, which intelligently examines the nature of the deed, maintains that a man who is a sinner could not do such things. The man on whom the miracle had been performed basically follows the same line of reasoning and says that he is a prophet. He had not yet learned accurately who he was in truth, but he was following a common notion among the Jews. They had the custom of referring to miracle workers as "prophets" on the grounds that the miracles served as divine testimony to their holiness. Accordingly, just as they are right not to dishonor the magnitude of the divine sign out of reverence for the sabbath, and because of that magnitude they say that he who performed the sign cannot be blamed for any sin, so also I think this man rejects narrow-mindedness regarding the sabbath and ascribes the glory of higher accomplishments to the one who gave him the gift of sight **[172]** by placing him in the rank of the saints and calling him a "prophet." Finally, he seems to me not to have had great pretensions about the regulations of the law. Otherwise he would not have admired Jesus so much, and neither would he have received his physician as a prophet in spite of his apparent violation of the sabbath law. Therefore, having benefited from the miracle and having reached a better state of mind than that of the Jews, he holds that the miracle worker (who considers transgression for the sake of good to be blameless) must be greater than the observance of the law.

9:18-19 The Jews did not believe that he had been blind and received his sight until they called the parents of the man who had received his sight and asked them, "Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?"

The bitter envy in them toward the healer does not allow them to believe what everyone admits. They are dominated by the frenzy of

[142]Prov 12:27.

their madness so they have no concern for the truth, and they speak falsely about Christ. First they tried to put pressure on the blind man, and now they are caught giving just as much pointless trouble to his parents as well, but the matter turned out completely opposite to the way they intended. They pose an utterly redundant question to the man's parents, and they seem to me, in their limitless stupidity, to dishonor the very law they so strongly advocated and revered. The neighbors brought the man "who had formerly been blind," as it is written.[143] They put him in front of those who were asking this question, and they reported that he was certainly born blind, and they testified that he has now received his sight. Now the law clearly decrees that every statement is proven true by the mouth of two or three witnesses,[144] **[173]** but they set aside the corroboration of not just two or three but probably of many when they go beyond them to the parents of the man who was healed. In so doing, they are behaving in a way that is both contrary to the law and ignorant of it. But the law means nothing to them when they are eager to carry out their own desires. When the testimony to the miracle, both by words of the neighbors and of the man who had been healed, put them to shame against their will, they expected to be able to persuade those whom they questioned to disregard the truth and to say what they wanted them to say. Notice how overbearing they are when they ask them, "Is this your son, who you say was born blind?" They are practically threatening to do all kinds of dreadful things to them and terrifying them with fear beyond measure, trying to force and compel them to say what they wanted to hear, that is, "He was not born blind." They have but one aim, and it is an impious one: to loosen Christ's hold on the crowds and to overthrow the simple faith of those who were astonished at him. Just as those who are eager to take some prosperous city surround it on all sides and use all kinds of strategies to force it to surrender, sometimes trying to dig through the foundations, other times striking the towers with blows from battering rams, so also the audacious Pharisees besiege the miracle with their own evil intentions and leave no evil strategy untried. But it was not possible to dismiss as worthless something that everyone knew about or to bring down to a less illustrious level what already astonished many. **[174]**

9:20-21 His parents answered, "We know that this is our son and that he was born blind, but we do not know how it is that he now sees, nor do we know who opened his eyes. Ask him; he is of age. He will speak for himself."

There is no doubt about what they acknowledge as true, and it is unlikely that they would suffer any harm for it from those with evil intent. After all, they are saying that they know their own offspring, and they do not deny his genuine condition at birth, but they clearly state that he was born with the affliction. However, they shrink back from relating the miracle, allowing the nature of the deed to speak for itself, or rather insisting that it would be more fitting to address the question, "How was he healed?" to their son. Fear of danger is a powerful motive that leads people to distance themselves from what they ought to do. That is why, shaking in fear of the savage Pharisees, they fail to observe the beautiful saying, "Fight to the death for truth."[145]

Now it is likely that they were affected by something else as well. The poor are always timid, since poverty takes away their ability to look people in the eye, and they often withdraw to an unwilling silence and a forced

[143]Jn 9:13.
[144]Deut 19:15.
[145]Sir 4:28.

acquiescence. As if they are already crushed enough by their burden of poverty, they are numb when it comes to bearing further hardship. We may surmise that the parents of the blind man suffered something like this, even though their answer is quite plausible. After all, anyone would grant that recognition of their offspring is of course more appropriately sought from them than from their offspring, while recognition of the physician is not at all a matter for the parents. That would belong more fittingly to the man who experienced the grace of the miracle. Therefore, **[175]** they plainly acknowledge what they know in those matters where it is appropriate to ask them, but where he could speak more truly, since he has more accurate knowledge, they call on him for the answer.

Furthermore, it is not without divine guidance, it seems to me, that they add the words, "He is of age." In a way, this too indicts the Pharisees for their unholiness. If the man who received his sight has the faculty of reason because of his age and time of life, then when he tells of the miracle and how it happened to him, he will not speak with childish thoughts but with a mind that is now mature and able to advocate whatever position he wants. So of necessity, this shows the shameless bad faith of the Pharisees. See, they believe neither the neighbors nor the blind man himself, even though he is not speaking with some immature mind nor is he prone to slipping into a false story because of childish thoughts; rather he is "of age," which means that he is not ignorant of the nature of events.

9:22 His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews; for the Jews had already agreed that anyone who confessed him to be the Christ would be put out of the synagogue.

It is well said and appropriate when our Lord Jesus Christ brings down woe on the heads of the Pharisees: "Woe to you lawyers! For you have taken away the key of knowledge; you did not enter yourselves, and you hindered those who were entering."[146] Let the devout person once again consider whether the beauty of the truth will agree with his words. Christ, after all, could never be deceived. **[176]** Look at it. Besides their unwillingness to teach anyone about his advent, they strike terror in those who are able to come to him in response to the glory of his accomplishments. In their cruelty, they resort to harsh intimidation to stop any of them who is vigorous enough to acknowledge the miracle. By putting those who are right minded (and therefore disposed to believe) out of the synagogue, those wretches do not blush to use their authority to alienate from God, so to speak, those who cling to him and to persuade them that the Lord of all is in agreement with all the madness that they themselves are full of. The marvelous Evangelist defends those who were questioned, however, and says that they were overcome by fear, and that is why they did not want to say that Christ healed their son. So by exposing the magnitude of the Jews' madness, he makes it clear to future generations. What could be more inhuman than these people, who decree punishment for those who think rightly and who force those who have any understanding of him who was proclaimed by the Law and the Prophets into a position where they are subject to penalty? We will find in the Holy Scriptures that the evil designs of the Jews were not unknown to holy prophets. The one who searches hearts and inner parts, who "pierces until he divides soul from spirit, joints from marrow, who is able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart, before whom all things are naked and laid bare,"[147] says through the prophet Isaiah, "Woe to the rebellious children! Thus says the Lord: You carried out a

[146]Lk 11:52.
[147]Heb 4:12-13.

plan, but not mine; you made covenants, but not by my Spirit, to add sin to sin."[148]

Now whoever says that Jesus is Lord will most certainly be speaking by the Holy Spirit, as Paul says.[149] But whoever professes the contrary will not be speaking by the Holy Spirit. What is their source? They will speak by Beelzeboul. **[177]** Therefore, the agreement of the Jews was not made through the Holy Spirit, since they added sin to sin: first of all, they brought down on their own heads the destruction that comes from unbelief; then they passed it on to others by preventing them from confessing Christ. Their attempt is truly full of the most extreme godlessness, though the psalmist laughs at those who precariously attempt fruitless undertakings saying, "O Lord, you will confound them in your wrath, and fire will consume them; you will destroy their offspring from the earth, their seed from among humankind. For they intended evil against you; they devised a plan which cannot succeed."[150] They were not strong enough to carry out their plan to fight against God, even though they often attempted in ten thousand ways to conceal the glory of Christ. Therefore, they were turned back, that is, they were driven from the face and sight of the Lord of all, justly hearing, "Walk in the light of your fire and in the flame that you have kindled."[151]

9:24 So for the second time they called the man who had been blind, and they said to him, "Give glory to God! We know that this man is a sinner."

Since they were not able to stop the man from speaking well of Christ, they attempt to accomplish this by a different scheme. They proceed to entice him toward their goal with a sort of noble bait. They try to convince him with many arguments to forget all about Christ and not even to mention him as a physician, and they craftily say that he should "give glory to God" for the miracle, thus feigning piety. Yet they command him to agree with **[178]** and believe them when they reach the pinnacle of all impiety and say that he who came to destroy sin is a "sinner." They bring forward no proof whatsoever of their false accusation. Since they are boasters and have an extraordinarily high opinion of themselves, merely because they are leaders of the people, they command the people to trust them as judges of character and insist on it as if it were their duty. The words *we know* will be found to be pregnant with sheer arrogance, at least by those who examine the implications.

On the following count as well, one may gaze in limitless wonder at the senseless mind of the Jews. They order that glory be given to God for the miracle since he alone does such deeds, but they condemn him who performed the works of God by his own strength. And not only do those wretches themselves do this, but they also force others to agree with them. When they insist that they just know that Christ is clearly a sinner, they are unaware that they are asserting the worst accusations against their own head. They are accustomed to make great boasts about their knowledge of the law and to exhibit unbearable pomposity concerning the Holy Scriptures. So they will surely pay a greater penalty since it was possible for them to know the mystery of Christ, who was typified and proclaimed in many ways in the Law and the Prophets, but they clung in utter heedlessness to their self-chosen ignorance. Or if they did have accurate knowledge, they were always stubbornly unwilling to do what they ought. They should have guided the mind of the common people to an understanding of the mysteries of Christ, and they should have tried to lead the mind of others to a knowledge of what they should know. With their profusion of argu-

[148]Is 30:1.
[149]1 Cor 12:3.
[150]Ps 21:9-11 (Ps 20:10-12 LXX).
[151]Is 50:11.

ments and **[179]** terrible pride, they cry out with far too high an opinion of themselves, "We know." They reject the statements of the law and think nothing of the teachings of Moses, while the teachings of the prophets seem to them to be those of a thoughtless mob. After all, they have no place at all in their understanding for what the prophets declared will happen at the time of the advent of Christ our Savior. "Then," it says, "the eyes of the blind will be opened, and the ears of the deaf will hear; then the lame will leap like a deer, and the tongue of the stammerers will speak plainly."[152] Now the paralytic was healed at the pool of Bethesda. After being "ill for thirty-eight years," as it is written,[153] at one word of the Savior, he took up his mat and leaped away like a deer. And when they ought to have marveled at Jesus for that, they lamented the breaking of the sabbath. They insisted that the law had been transgressed, and they disparaged the grace of the miracle. At another time, a demon was cast out and a deaf man spoke.[154] But they sank to such terrible ignorance that they did not gain even a little profit from it. Then the blind man regained his sight, the prophetic proclamation was fulfilled, and the word of the Spirit came to pass. And what happened? Again they go mad. They condemn the miracle worker. They ascribe sin to the one who has the power to shine with God-befitting glory and who makes present what was expected since long ago.

9:25 He answered, "I do not know whether he is a sinner. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see."

It seems that the formerly blind man receives a twofold grace from Christ. His mind is somehow enlightened along with the eyes of his body. He possesses the light of our sun in his fleshly eyes, but **[180]** the spiritual ray, so to speak (I mean illumination by the Spirit), enters him, and he receives it in his heart. Hear how he opposes the brutality of the leaders out of intense love for Christ and how he cleverly chastises them for being well-nigh intoxicated and beside themselves. But he weaves his words together with due modesty. Giving appropriate respect to the rank of leadership, he courteously says, "I do not know whether he is a sinner."

Now this does not mean that the man was unaware that Christ was not a sinner. Rather, we think he was stating something like the following to them. Perhaps he said, I may have been forced against my will to acquiesce to what is wrong, but I cannot bear to make false accusations against my benefactor. I will not concur with those who want to dishonor him who deserves all honor. I will not say that he who performs such a miracle is a sinner. I will not wickedly cast a vote against him who has the power to do the works of God. The miracle that has come to light in me does not allow me to consent to your words. "I was blind and now I see." I am not relying on someone else telling me of this man's deeds. I am not being carried away by the reports of mere strangers. It is not deeds performed on others that lead me to marvel. No I myself, he says, who once was blind, stand here seeing as a proof of his power, as a kind of image hinting at the beauty of his love for humanity and lighting up the sky with the greatness of his God-befitting authority. I think that some meaning like that should be attached to the words of the man who had regained his sight. After all, to say, "I do not know whether he is a sinner," and then to add immediately, "One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see," introduces a deeper meaning that does not lend itself to some simplistic interpretation but to a very wise one. **[181]**

[152]Is 35:5-6.
[153]Jn 5:5.
[154]Mk 7:32-37.

9:26 They said to him, "What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?"

Again they question him and ask about the way the divine sign was performed. They do this not for noble reasons or for the sake of learning something profitable, but because they think that if anyone at all speaks well of Christ, this is more disgraceful than any other injury and beyond any other evil. They stir all these issues up again, thinking that perhaps the man would not say the same thing this time, or perhaps he would slip up in his narration of the event and contradict what he said before. Then they would seize upon the contradiction and show him to be a fabricator and a liar. They who were so proud of their great intelligence figured that the power of the miracle was maintained only by the mere words of the man rather than being clear in the act itself.

Furthermore, I think they experienced something like the following. Those who are not reluctant to hate people unjustly, when questioning people about something they think they did wrong, want to hear their explanations not once, but many times. In this way, they elevate their anger about the event, which was perhaps slow to develop, to a fever pitch. That is because the conscience always accuses our actions. It shames us and does not stop accusing us of injustice, even if doing wrong may seem sweet because of our attachment to it.[155] So they harass the man who had been healed and force him against his will to go through the story again and repeat the same statements as they practically nod at each other, urging each other to watch carefully to see whether **[182]** anything had been done contrary to the law when the divine sign was performed on the sabbath. Conscience curbs their savage plans, putting a bridle on them, so to speak, even though they are unwilling to acknowledge its accusation.

9:27 He answered them, "I have told you already, and you would not listen. Why do you want to hear it again?"

It now seems superfluous, he says, to repeat the same story to an audience who does not believe it. And it is entirely pointless for you to keep asking about these matters over and over again, since you gain nothing at all from it, even though you have learned the answer and should be persuaded by it. But now you order me to go through the same statement again to no good purpose, as experience shows. With these words, the man who had been healed convicts the Pharisees of being completely unreasonable, "turning away from listening to the truth," as it is written,[156] since they were not legitimately angry at the breaking of the law, but with their questions they were ordering him who wanted to praise the wonder worker to speak as an accuser. They would not accept him as an admirer. This was their true intent since the transgression of the law was completely irrelevant and of no account to them. That is why, you see, they refuse to judge rightly and are bent on confirming their own opinions, even though that means ignoring God, who says, "The lips of the priest shall guard judgment, and people shall seek the law from his mouth."[157]

"Do you also want to become his disciples?" Now he confesses clearly and without any evasion **[183]** that he has become a disciple through the miracle, even though there happened to be no instruction. He now believes, and his miraculous sight serves as his instruction. Indeed, by saying to them, "Do

[155]Cyril seems to be suggesting that the Pharisees engage in repeated questioning to stir up their own anger in an attempt to overcome the accusations of their own conscience.

[156]2 Tim 4:4.

[157]Mal 2:7.

you also want to become his disciples?" he reveals his own intentions, so to speak, as one who now does want to and has become his disciple. Even before he has the fullness of faith, he puts into practice to some degree the statement, "Freely you have received; freely give."[158] He is prepared at once to teach them ungrudgingly what is profitable. He tells them about the miracle often and without hesitation, if only they would actually take his explanation as instruction. He has therefore observed quite well the statement in the book of Proverbs, "He speaks to attentive listeners."[159]

Now it seems that these words are hinting at some deep and hidden meaning, and I will briefly explain what it is. There were some among the leaders who recognized that the wonder worker truly was the Christ, but they kept their knowledge of him buried in their heart, so to speak, and so remained unnoticed for a long time. The wise Evangelist himself testifies to us that the rulers knew that he was the Christ, "but because of the Pharisees, they did not confess it."[160] And Nicodemus contends for this claim in a way when he cries out explicitly and says to our Lord Jesus Christ, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God; for no one can do these signs that you do apart from the presence of God."[161] Some of the rulers, then, knew, and news of this spread throughout all Jerusalem. Most of the Jews suspect that the rulers know, but **[184]** they refuse to admit it because of malice and envy. And we will show from the Gospel writings themselves that this is true. The blessed John himself says somewhere that Jesus stood teaching in the temple, and what he taught seemed to go against the law, at least in the opinion of the hearers. But the leaders of the Jews did not react at all. They did not venture so much as to say, "You there! Stop teaching what disagrees with the ancient laws." That is how the suspicion we just mentioned arose among the crowds. Indeed, as it is written, "Now some of the people of Jerusalem were saying, 'Is not this the man they are trying to kill? Here he is, speaking openly to them, and they say nothing to him! Can it be that the rulers know that he is the Christ?'"[162] This is tantamount to saying, "Those whose office is to lead know that he is really the Christ. See, they are known to want his blood, but they do not give him so much as a mere reprimand, even though he is speaking with such great boldness." This idea, then, spread all throughout Jerusalem. At some point the blind man heard it, and he had the report about these people ringing in his ears. So he gracefully rebukes them in a way and says, "There is no reason for you to order me to repeat the same words and to praise the miracle again. Or is it that you take great pleasure in the story because even now you thirst after instruction about him, but you are afraid of what others will think, and you put ungrateful embarrassment ahead of such excellent knowledge?" **[185]**

9:28 Then they reviled him, saying, "*You* are that man's disciple, but *we* are disciples of Moses."

The Evangelist says this with a hint of laughter. He watches as those who hold the office of priest slide into apoplexy on this issue to the point where they make something so holy into an object to be reviled, namely, discipleship under Christ. Some of the saints, experiencing an admirable love for that discipleship, say, "How sweet are your words to my throat; sweeter than honey and honeycomb to my mouth!"[163] And someone else, speaking to our Lord Jesus Christ about those who do not

[158]Mt 10:8.
[159]Sir 25:9.
[160]Jn 12:42.
[161]Jn 3:2.
[162]Jn 7:25-26.
[163]Ps 119:103 (Ps 118:103 LXX).

believe in him, says, "Consume them, and your word will be my heart's joy and gladness and rejoicing."[164] They, however, place no value on the sacred words, and they think that the one who is Christ's disciple is by this very fact subject to accusation. And they cast a vote against themselves, based on a true opinion, when they assign Christ to be the blind man's teacher and Moses to be their own. And in fact, the Gentiles were truly enlightened by Christ through the teaching of the gospel, while Israel perished in the types given through Moses and was buried in the shadow of the letter. That is why Paul says of them somewhere, "To this very day whenever Moses is read, a veil lies over their heart."[165] And without a doubt, we have recorded the story of the blind man as a type of the Gentiles, just like an image, reshaping what was said in type about him into the truth about them.

However, it surely also indicates this: that enduring reproach for the sake of Christ is an enjoyable and fully glorious experience. Those who do not shrink from persecution intend to inflict pain on those who love him, but the very tactics they use actually bring joy (though the persecutors do not realize it). Indeed, the persecutors make their victims glorious to a greater extent than they are able to cause them any real harm. The destructive Pharisees seem to disparage themselves, not to mention Christ, when they say of the blind man that he is "that man's" disciple, and they swell up, as it were, with arrogant pretension when they say, "*We* are disciples of Moses."

9:29 "We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from."

Again they sound off, armed with their usual fault-finding foolishness. Swaggering with undeterred shamelessness, they exclaim, "We know!" They add, "God has spoken to Moses," thereby recognizing that he deserves special honor, yet they turn around and insult him by disregarding his teachings. They ignorantly condemn him whom they do not yet know, or rather, they irreverently dishonor him in spite of what they have learned about him, even though the law completely forbids them from doing anything unjust or unfair to anyone or making unjust judgments. Now with their statement, they are saying something like the following: Admittedly, "God has spoken to Moses." There is no reason for anyone to doubt this. God decreed the laws through him, and laid down prescriptions about how everything should be done. Therefore, they say, whoever holds opinions contrary to the regulations given through Moses is a transgressor of the sacred Scriptures. And the sabbath law has clearly been broken, since you were healed on the sabbath. So we know that he who was caught and condemned for this is not righteous, **[187]** and we now have good reason to say that he has not kept the divine law.

Now when they say of Christ, "We do not know where he comes from," they do not say this because they are unaware of who he is or where he comes from. After all, elsewhere they are caught clearly admitting that they know these facts about him. "Is not this the carpenter's son, whose father and mother we know? How can he now say, 'I have come down from heaven'?"[166] Therefore, we should not take the statement "We do not know where he comes from" to indicate ignorance, but we should look at it as the fruit of their arrogance. When they make this statement about him, they are rejecting their own previous judgment and placing absolutely no value on it.

It is also likely that they intend to demonstrate something like the following (since it is only fair to their arguments that we should

[164]Jer 15:16.
[165]2 Cor 3:15.
[166]Mt 13:55; Jn 6:42.

enter into more careful scrutiny of them): "We know," they say, "that God has spoken to Moses," so we must believe without hesitation those things spoken through him, and we must keep the commandments given by God. "But as for this man, we do not know," since God has not spoken to him, nor do we recognize anything of the sort concerning him. However, the Pharisees, even though they like to be wise in their own conceit and exult in their great knowledge of God's word, should have considered this: God the Father proclaims the future advent of Jesus through the all-wise Moses when he says, "I will raise up for them a prophet like you from their brothers. I will put my word in his mouth, and he will speak to them just as I command him. And anyone who does not listen to whatever that prophet says in my name, I myself will hold accountable."[167] One might reasonably reproach the Jews, saying, O you who only know how to disbelieve, if you are so eagerly convinced by Moses' words because **[188]** God has spoken to him, should you not take the same view of Christ when you hear him cry out explicitly, "The words that I speak are not mine but belong to the Father who sent me,"[168] and again, "I do not speak on my own, but the Father who sent me has himself given me a commandment about what to say and what to speak"?[169] The words of the Pharisees, then, are a pretext and an invention of vain argumentation. If they say that the reason they should follow Moses is that God has spoken to him, why do they not take the same view of Christ when he states clearly what we just mentioned? Though they honor the law in part and pretend to hold God's will in high esteem, in another way they violate and dishonor it by refusing to accept the most vital part of its proclamation, that is, what it announced about Christ, that he would appear as a prophet through his *oikonomia* in the flesh.

9:30 The man answered, "Here is an astonishing thing! You do not know where he comes from, and yet he opened my eyes."

I am astonished, he says quite rightly, that you say you do not know him who is attested by the great holiness and God-befitting power shown in his actions, even though you are thought to give incessant attention to God, you administer the law, you revel in the sacred words, you hold the office of leadership, and so you of all people should know, since you are the deep thinkers. After all, who would have accurate knowledge of those who work miracles by God's power if not those who are appointed to serve as priests and those to whom the holy mystery has been entrusted for contemplation? By saying that he is astonished that they had no knowledge at all of him who performed such a strange and remarkable divine sign on him, he covertly attacks **[189]** them for being so far removed from sanctification and fitting piety that they shamelessly admit that they have absolutely no knowledge of him who is truly holy, that is, Christ.

Let us lay bare what we just said. If what was said so well somewhere is true, that "every creature loves what is like itself, and people stick close to those like themselves,"[170] how then, if they were really holy and good, did they turn away and refuse to stick close to the one who is holy and good? What he said, therefore, was pregnant with a rebuke of the accursed behavior and conduct of the Pharisees. I think that something else makes this clear as well. I think that whoever applies a diligent mind to these statements will accordingly perceive more sharply what seems to be hidden in each. And what is that? There was a widespread report circulating among all Judea

[167]Deut 18:18-19.
[168]Jn 14:10, 24.
[169]Jn 12:49.
[170]Sir 13:15-16.

concerning Christ our Savior, but it spoke of him only as a prophet. That is, after all, how the law prophesied he would come: "The Lord our God will raise up a prophet from your brothers."[171] However, they hoped that when he appeared at his own time, he would speak with them of matters above the law. They hoped he would carefully go through the truer intent of the lawgiver and reeducate them with more fitting knowledge. And you should not be surprised that such a report and hope was found among the Jews, when the same report was spread abroad in other nations as well. Take, for example, that Samaritan woman: "I know that the Messiah is coming (who is called Christ). When he comes, he will proclaim all things to us."[172] So the Jews knew quite clearly that Christ would come (since that is what "Messiah" means) and that he would explain to them the higher counsel of God. In addition to this, it was agreed that he would open the eyes of the blind as well, because Isaiah the prophet states clearly, **[190]** "Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened."[173] Another notion was circulating around Jerusalem as well, since the prophet Isaiah says that his ineffable birth from God the Father is completely unknown: "Who shall declare his generation?"[174] Moreover, the Jews distorted the meaning of these words in accordance with their own ideas, and they supposed that Christ would be altogether unknown and that no one would know where he is from at all, even though the divine Scripture establishes for us his birth according to the flesh with utter clarity. On this point, it cries out, "Behold, the virgin will conceive and bear a son."[175] It is not difficult to see that the mind of the Jews was uneducated when it comes to understanding essential matters and that they supposed that Christ would be unknown. We see this when the blessed Evangelist John reported how the Jerusalemites saw him: "Now some of the people of Jerusalem were saying, 'Is not this the man they are trying to kill? And here he is, speaking openly, but they say nothing to him! Can it be that the rulers really know that he is the Christ? Yet we know where this man is from; but when the Christ comes, no one will know where he is from.'"[176]

So as the Jews are propounding such uninformed views concerning Christ, the man who had been blind now quickly forms his view of him from the miracle, and he all but seizes the words of the Pharisees as confirmation of his own argument. "Here is a surprising thing!" he says, "You do not know where he comes from, and yet he opened my eyes." I have two very clear signs, he says, that he is the Christ: you do not know where he comes from, and yet he opened my eyes. Therefore, he is clearly the same one who was foretold by the law and testified to by the voice of the prophets. **[191]**

9:31 "We know that God does not listen to sinners, but he does listen to one who worships him and obeys his will."

After reveling somewhat in the fact that the proclamations of the prophets and the law were now fulfilled, both in that they did not know where Christ was from and in that the eyes of the blind were opened, he collects for himself aids to faith from every quarter, and he discovers something else as well. Starting from necessary and agreed-upon concepts, he undertakes to go on a search for what is profitable and fitting, and he puts together a certain syllogism, as it were, that is God-pleasing. With sound reasoning, he maintains that God, who loves righteousness and virtue, does not ever listen to those who delight in sin. Then, putting this in the category of what is

[171]Deut 18:15.
[172]Jn 4:25.
[173]Is 35:5.
[174]Is 53:8.
[175]Is 7:14.
[176]Jn 7:25-27.

undoubtedly agreed upon, he introduces the opposite as true and indisputable—I mean of course that the Lord of all altogether and entirely listens to those who make a habit of reverence. And although the conclusion is intended to refer to Christ alone, it is constructed in a general way and has a universal meaning. As I have already mentioned before, the man who had been blind has too earthly a conception of Christ. Since he has not yet accurately learned that he is God by nature, he thinks and speaks as if Christ were a prophet to whom he might blamelessly ascribe reverence toward God. But this does not fit Christ at all. He is God by nature, and so he receives worship as their spiritual sacrifice from those who are reverent. **[192]**

9:32 "Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a person born blind."

He was stung to no small degree, it seems, and he grieved, as it were, and suffered unbearably because of their insults against Christ when they reproached him saying, "*You* are that man's disciple, but *we* are the disciples of Moses." So he is eager to support his teacher, and he marshals, so to speak, our Savior's glorious deeds against the accomplishments of Moses, showing that he is as superior to Moses as he is a greater wonder worker. After all, does it not follow that the one who accomplishes greater works must surely be superior in glory as well? This is not to be doubted.

Along with that, he seems to suggest something like the following. A very ancient prophecy foretells and says this about the coming of Christ: "Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened."[177] No one has ever before caused astonishment by performing such a deed, but it has been accomplished only by this man whom you (I do not know why, he says) do not hesitate to call a sinner. It seems to me that although a great chorus of holy prophets is mentioned and an incalculable number of righteous people are spoken of in the Holy Scriptures, "never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a person born blind." Is he not therefore the Christ, who fulfills prophecies and brings to completion the ancient proclamation? If no one else but him opens the eyes of the blind, what then will stand in the way of faith? What will prevent us from praising him? With every doubt out of the way, how could the mystery of knowing him not rush to us down the easiest road?

[193] The man who had been healed defends Christ the Savior. See how skillfully he weaves together the argument for his support. It would have been utterly bold and frank to say that Christ is greater and more glorious than Moses and the prophets. However, it was not unreasonable to suppose that the Pharisees would be upset by this and would maliciously pretend to fight for the saints who they thought were insulted. They would then have a good excuse to try to punish the man so that he would not continue to live and be seen as a reminder of Christ's glory and an image, as it were, of the God-befitting authority that he has. Therefore, he subtly avoids the anger that would result from this and shuts off the entrance that would allow their murderous intentions to move forward. To do this, he shifts the subject matter of his argument so that it is universal and not specific, saying that no one "since the world began" has ever done what Christ has done for him. This accomplished nothing else than to show that Christ was greater and more glorious than all. By his deeds, he demonstrates that he has power and authority that none of the saints ever possessed. Thus he crowns his healer with superiority over all, taking as his proof the miracle that was never attempted or accomplished by anyone else, that is, the overcoming of blindness.

[177] Is 35:5.

9:33 "If this man were not from God, he could do nothing."

The man who just received his sight and was miraculously freed from his lifelong blindness perceives the truth more quickly than those who are educated in the law. See! See, he employs a great many **[194]** wise arguments to demonstrate the utter baseness of the Pharisees' thinking. When they ignorantly said of Christ, "We do not know where he comes from," he vigorously accuses them of wrong thinking because they say they have no knowledge at all of him who works such miracles, when it is clear to everyone that a person who is not "from God" would not be able to do anything that is accomplished by divine activity. After all, God does such deeds only through his saints, and he would never grant to a stranger who had not come to worship him the ability to boast in such glories. So let the deranged Pharisee step forward and tell us: What then is the difference in God's eyes between the saint and the profane person, the righteous person and the sinner, the unholy person and the one who loves God? If he allows each one to achieve equal glory through the same means, there is no longer any distinction, but everything is now poured together, and we will say in the words of that well-crafted passage, "How shall we fittingly serve him, and what is the benefit if we appear before him?"[178] If, as one of the Greek poets said, "The same fate waits for each, no matter how hard one fights,"[179] and the wicked and good person are both held in equal honor, how is it not vain to go through difficult struggles for the sake of virtue? But we should not think that this is so. Why? Because "those who honor me," says God, "I will honor, and those who despise me shall be treated with contempt."[180]

I, for my part, would ask the conceited Pharisees, If God accomplishes such feats without distinction even through sinners, why did the magicians in the land of Egypt not do the same deeds as the great Moses? **[195]** Why did they not achieve the same glory as him by performing equal miracles? You will say that Moses' rod fell to the ground and became a snake, and so did the rods of the magicians. You will hear this response from us: their rods did not turn into a snake, but there was a deception and an optical illusion that took the form of a snake, and it was a certain magical art that made the rod look like a snake. Moses' rod, however, truly turned into a snake and changed into the nature of an animal. From the distinction laid out in the Holy Scriptures, you can see that what I have said is true. Moses' rod swallowed up theirs. Since their rods were merely in the form of snakes, while his was truly and by nature what it appeared to be, his became angry (which means that it was clearly a living being and no longer a rod) and it devoured the others with an ineffable power beyond that of a snake. God made such a difficult feat easy.

Next, let the Pharisee tell me why those who imposed the form of snakes on their rods did not make a leprous hand clean but gave up and explicitly admitted, "This is the finger of God!"[181] How is it, tell me, that the priests of Baal did not bring down fire from heaven, yet Elijah brought it down?[182] Are God's ways, then, characterized by partiality?[183] By no means! He is righteous, after all, and he loves the righteous, so he accomplishes gracious miracles through those who are holy, but never through transgressors. Therefore, the man who had been blind has excellent reasons for rebuking the babbling of the Pharisees. He convicts them of an erroneous opinion since

[178]Job 21:15.
[179]*Iliad* 9.318.
[180]1 Sam 2:30 (1 Kings 2:30 LXX).
[181]Ex 8:19.
[182]1 Kings 18:24-38 (3 Kings 18:24-38 LXX).
[183]Cf. Acts 10:34.

they say that he is not "from God," when his ability to do miracles testifies that he is from God by nature. **[196]**

9:34 They answered him, "You were born entirely in sin, and you are trying to teach us?" And they cast him out.

Most people find the wounds of rebuke and correction hard to take. But the wise find them endurable and even sweet since there is much profit in them and they lead to improvement, even though they carry a painful sting. These wounds are bitter, however, for those who love sin. Why is that? Because they have set their mind on debasing pleasures, and so they reject as vexing any admonition that would cut them off from those pleasures. They consider diversion from their pleasures to be harmful, and they place no value on what is profitable.

It is like those who fall overboard from a ship and are caught by the current of the river. They are not strong enough to resist it, and they think it is dangerous to swim against the water, so they are swept along by the force of the current alone. I think that in the same way, those whom I have just mentioned are overcome by the tyranny of their own pleasures. They entrust the reins completely to those pleasures and offer no resistance. So the wretched Pharisees are upset. They shriek like animals at him who presents to them the noblest of ideas. They welcome the beginnings of anger. As the extreme madness comes gushing out of them, they heap abuse on him contrary to the law. They jump back, so to speak, into their usual arrogance and say that the blind man was "born in sin," ridiculing him with their Jewish assumptions on this issue and ignorantly advocating an incoherent doctrine. After all, no one is born with blindness or any other physical ailment because of themselves or their parents, **[197]** nor does God visit the sins of the fathers upon the children. We have demonstrated these things (not unskillfully, I think) in a long discussion explaining the passage, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?"[184]

Since the man who had been blind knew how to refute the Pharisees, he was not only reviled but also cast out by them. And you should take this act as a type of the true event, namely that the Israelites, because of their unfair prejudice, were going to detest the Gentiles as being raised in sin. Anyone can see this from what the Pharisees said to him. And they send him away, just as the ambassadors of the message about Christ are sent away and cast out by the Jews.

9:35 Jesus heard that they had cast him out.

The divinely inspired Evangelist says that our Lord Jesus Christ "heard," certainly not implying that anyone had to report to him what had happened. Rather, as it says somewhere of the wise, "The spirit of the Lord has filled the world, and the ear of hearing hears all things."[185] Surely he hears, as the psalmist says: "He who planted the ear, does he not hear? He who formed the eye, does he not see?"[186] So when we are insulted on account of him or we endure any grief because of God's enemies, we should therefore believe that God will surely see it and that he hears, as it were, about the trial we are undergoing. The nature of the event itself and the genuineness of those who are being dishonored on his account cry aloud in God's ears. **[198]**

And when he found him, he said, "Do *you* believe in the Son of God?"

The man who had been blind was cast out by the Pharisees, but after not too much time Christ seeks him out, and when he finds him,

[184]Jn 9:2, pp. 22-27.
[185]Wis 1:7, 10.
[186]Ps 94:9 (Ps 93:9 LXX).

he initiates him into the mysteries. Now this too will be a sign for us that God keeps in mind those who are willing to speak up for him and who do not shrink from danger because of their faith in him. You hear how he reveals himself as a kind of munificent reward and is eager to plant in him the most perfect message of faith. He poses the question in order to receive assent. This is the way of faith. That is why those on their way to divine baptism are first asked whether they believe, and when they assent and confess, we then admit them to grace as genuine. The type of this practice is first found in this passage, and we have learned from our Savior Christ himself how this profession of faith should be made. That is why the divinely inspired Paul asserted that the confession of these matters was made in the presence of many witnesses, that is, the holy angels.[187] If it is a horrible thing to speak falsely in front of the angels, how much more horrible is it to speak falsely in front of Christ himself?

Now he asks the formerly blind man not simply whether he was willing to believe, but he mentions in whom. After all, faith is "in the Son of God"—not in a human being like one of us, but in the incarnate God. In this way, the mystery concerning Christ is complete. When he says, "Do *you* believe," he is practically saying, "Are you willing to show yourself superior to their madness? Will you bid farewell to their unbelief **[199]** and accept the faith?" since the emphatic *you* implies some sort of distinction from others.[188]

9:36 "And who is he, Lord?" he said. "Tell me, so that I may believe in him."

The soul that is equipped with sound reasoning and that searches for the truth with clear eyes of understanding reaches it without impediment, just like a ship putting into port. With no effort, it catches its prey, that is, the benefit that comes from the truth. Once again, the man who had been blind will be the proof of this claim. After he expressed amazement at the mystery of Christ with many arguments and considerations—after he was stunned by Christ's ineffable power that he, not someone else, experienced for himself—he is thereby found ready to believe and without delay proceeds to do so. See—see, he asks to whom he should attach the faith that was already built up in him. That was all he was missing, and he was previously prepared for it, as we have said.

9:37 Jesus said to him, "You have seen him, and the one speaking with you is he."

When asked in whom it is proper to believe, Jesus points to himself. And he does not simply say, "I am the one," but he says that the one who is seen and speaking is the Son of God. In this response, he is giving thorough forethought to our benefit and weaving together in multiple ways aids to faith that are free from error and aberration, so that we do not fall into the net and snare **[200]** of the devil, thinking we are pious, but foolishly turning aside from the truth of the mystery. There are now some who think they are Christians who do not understand accurately the point of the *oikonomia* with the flesh. They dare to separate from the Word of God that temple that was assumed for us from the woman, and they divide the one true Son into two sons just because he became a human being.[189] In their complete senselessness, they are apparently ashamed to confess what the

[187] 1 Tim 6:12.

[188] In Greek, the emphasis is achieved by expressing the personal pronoun: Σὺ πιστεύεις. In English, since personal pronouns are always expressed, I have rendered the emphasis by using italics: "Do *you* believe?"

[189] Athanasius describes this view, along with other christological errors, in his letter to Epictetus (*Epistle* 59.2). Later, Cyril will argue against Nestorius for taking a similar view.

Only Begotten was not ashamed to do for us. He, after all, "though he was in the form of God," as it is written, "did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave,"[190] in order to become human like us, though of course without sin. They, however, bizarrely think they are somehow honoring God's loving plan by mentally excluding the temple assumed from the woman from true sonship. They do not accept his humility, but they contrive an opinion that is far removed from the truth. They say that the only begotten Son of God the Father, that is, the Word who was begotten of his substance, is one; and the son of the woman is another. Since the divinely inspired Scripture proclaims the Son and Christ to be one, how could they not be full of all ungodliness when they divide the one true Son into two? In that he is God the Word, he is thought of as different than the flesh. In that he is flesh, he is thought of as something different than the Word. However, in that the Word of God the Father became a human being, the distinction between the one and the other[191] will have no force at all because of the ineffable union and conjunction. There is one and only one Son, both before and after he came together with the flesh. And by "flesh," we are referring to the complete human being, I mean one consisting of body and soul. It is for this reason, then, that the Lord with the greatest foresight, **[201]** when asked who the Son of God is, did not say, "I am." If he had said that, it might be possible for some to suppose in their ignorance that his answer referred only to the Word who came from God the Father. So first he reveals himself with respect to the aspect that seems doubtful to some by saying, "You have seen him," and then right next to that he shows the Word dwelling in the flesh by adding, "and the one speaking with you is he." You see then how great a unity the Word has. He makes no distinction but says that he is both the one who is accessible to the eyes of the body and the one who is known by speaking. It is therefore ignorant and completely ungodly to use the thoughtless phrase *the man of Christ*, as some do. While still being God, he became a human being without being separated from his divinity, and he is Son even with his flesh. The most perfect confession and knowledge of faith in him consists in these truths.

9:38 He said, "Lord, I believe." And he worshiped him.

The man who had been blind was keen to confess (the faith, I mean) and eager for godliness. When he realized that it was truly the only begotten Son who was present and visible to him, "he worshiped him" as God, even though he saw him in the flesh, lacking glory that is truly fit for God. He was enlightened in his heart because of his power and authority, and he correspondingly advances to an understanding that is wise and good, and the beauty of the Son's divine and ineffable nature becomes clear to him. After all, **[202]** he would not have worshiped him as God if he did not believe him to be God, led to think this by what happened to him, that is, the wonder that was miraculously performed.

Since we transferred his entire experience and applied it to the Gentiles, come, let us discuss this next. Note that by his worship, he brings to fulfillment the type of spiritual service to which the Gentiles were led by faith. Israel was accustomed to serve the Lord of all by sacrificing oxen and incense and by offering other animals, as the law commands. The Gentile believers, however, do not know this way of worship but were turned to the other, that is, the spiritual. God says that this way is

[190]Phil 2:6-7.

[191]τὸ ἕτερος καὶ ἕτερος. Since Cyril uses masculine rather than neuter endings on the pronouns, he is denying that there are two personal subjects in Christ; he is not denying that there is a distinction of natures.

especially pleasing and dear to him. For I do not "eat the flesh of bulls," he says, "or drink the blood of goats."[192] Rather, he commands us to offer a "sacrifice of praise,"[193] that is, worship with song. The psalmist sees that the Gentiles, by faith and in the Holy Spirit, would surely ascend to this sacrifice, so he says to our Lord and Savior, "Let all the earth worship you and sing to you; let them sing to your name."[194] Indeed, our Lord Jesus Christ himself shows that spiritual worship is better than the worship of the law when he says to the Samaritan woman, "Believe me, woman, the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. The hour is coming and is now here when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth, for the Father seeks such as these to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and in truth."[195] And if we think rightly, we will conclude **[203]** that the holy angels exhibit this kind of worship, and they offer their worship to God as a sort of spiritual offering. For instance, when the Spirit commands the aforementioned beings to bring God-befitting honor to the Firstborn and Only Begotten, he says, "Let all God's angels worship him."[196] Moreover, the divine psalmist calls us to do this, saying, "O come, let us worship and bow down before him."[197] It would not be difficult to treat this at greater length, but we will measure our speech appropriately and refrain from extending the discussion for now. We will only recall once again that the man who had been blind beautifully fulfilled the type of the worship of the Gentiles by placing worship right next to his confession of faith.

[192]Ps 50:13 (Ps 49:13 LXX).
[193]Ps 50:14 (Ps 49:13 LXX).
[194]Ps 66:4 (Ps 65:4 LXX).
[195]Jn 4:21, 23-24.
[196]Deut 32:43; Heb 1:6.
[197]Ps 95:6 (Ps 94:6 LXX).

9:39 Jesus said, "I came into this world for judgment, so that those who do not see may see, and those who do see may become blind."

Christ, when explaining to us the cause of his manifestation (in this world, I mean), says through the voice of Isaiah, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the poor, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind."[198] Yes, and somewhere else he says, "Listen, you that are deaf; and you that are blind, look up and see!"[199] Now, when he says that he was chosen by God the Father for this reason: that he may proclaim recovery of sight to the blind, how can he say here that "I came into this world for judgment, so that those who do not see may see, and those who do see may become blind"? "Is Christ, then, a servant of sin?" someone might say in the words of Paul. "Certainly not!"[200] **[204]** He came to carry out his predetermined intention of kindness toward us, that is, to illuminate everyone by the torch of the Spirit. But the Jews were fierce in their unbelief. They did not accept the grace shining on them. Instead, they called down upon themselves a self-chosen darkness, as it were. For instance, it is written of them in the prophetic records, "They waited for light, but darkness came upon them; they waited for brightness but walked in gloom."[201] As far as the proclamation of the law is concerned, the Jews were waiting for brightness and light, that is, Christ. They did accept the fact that he would come, after all, and they did expect him. But they who seem godly on this account nevertheless walked in gloom, that is, in deep darkness. And there was no other cause for them

[198]Is 61:1.
[199]Is 42:18.
[200]Gal 2:17.
[201]Is 59:9.

suffering darkness except that by their own unbelief they drew the sickness onto themselves. I have come, then, he says, to give sight to the blind through faith, but the unrelenting opinion of those who are unleadable and insubordinate, which tends strongly toward unbelief, changed the arrival of the enlightener into judgment for them. Since they do not believe, they are condemned. The Savior has said this quite clearly, you know, in other words: "Truly, truly I say to you: whoever believes in the Son is not judged, but whoever does not believe in the Son is judged already, because they have not believed in the name of the Son of God."[202] So he cleverly engages in a discussion based on the matter at hand, and he turns the miracle performed on the man who had been blind into a kind of base for his discourse. He maintains that the man regained his sight not only physically but mentally as well. The Pharisees, however, suffered the opposite. They did not **[205]** see his glory, even though it shone brilliantly in that marvelous deed that was so great and novel.

9:40 Some of the Pharisees near him heard this and said to him, "Surely we are not blind, are we?"

The Pharisees keep close to Christ the Savior and are eager to associate with him, even though they have a sharp arrow in their heart and they are wasting away with vexation and envy at his glory. Nevertheless, they associate with him to gather food for their hatred and devise various false accusations against his marvelous deeds. This is how they paralyze the innocent minds of those who are ready to believe. When they questioned Christ as he said these things, they were cut to the heart again, since it is unlikely that they would not realize that the statement was aimed at them. But when he says generally and indefinitely, "so that those who do see may become blind,"[203] they do not yet have an occasion to mount a reasonable accusation as the insulted party, so they maliciously question the meaning of his statement, applying it to themselves and demanding, as it were, that he state more clearly whether he is saying that they too are blind, so they may condemn him as a transgressor of the command of the law. Since they studied the writings of Moses backward and forward, they knew that it is written, "You shall not speak evil of the rulers of your people."[204] They say these words either expecting to be insulted, so they may seem with good reason to attack Christ, be angry with him, and then take counsel against him without blame, or they really have such bitterness in their mind, and they give birth to the kind of slander that is characteristic of them. After all, when Christ said, "I came into this world for judgment, so that those who do not see may see,"[205] **[206]** and by these words he referred to the blind man's recovery of sight, they could not bear being reminded of the miracle. Provoked by envy, they rise up against him once more and try to oppose his statement. They do not hesitate to say what almost amounts to this: "You boast, sir, of terrible feats, but you have accomplished none of the deeds you think you have done. Surely you do not intend," they say, "to work your miracles on us. Will you be able to say that you have healed us too, since we are blind? Do you want us to ascribe to you the glory of a physician or a wonder worker, lying like that man whom you say was born blind but recovered his sight? Will you slander us too, now that you have dared to make these claims about him?" The words of the Pharisees, then, are wicked and extremely bitter as they ridicule the events

[202]Jn 3:18; cf. Jn 3:36.

[203]Jn 9:39.
[204]Ex 22:28.
[205]Jn 9:39.

relating to the blind man. They think they are false claims rather than the truth, since nothing shames the obstinate.

9:41 Jesus said to them, "If you were blind, you would not have sin. But now that you say, 'We see,' your sin remains."

Once again the Savior confounds them, mixing his accusation with skill. He avoids insulting them at all but shames them by presenting the force of the truth. He shows them that having sight gives them no benefit. Rather, they have fallen into a worse condition than one who cannot see at all. The person who is blind, he says, by not seeing any of the miracles that were performed, has escaped sin and remains blameless. But those who see and witness the miracles, but out of foolishness and evil intention do not receive the faith that comes from them, have sin that is hard to wash away, and the condemnation for this is truly difficult to escape. [**207**] Now it is not unpersuasive to understand this to refer to bodily blindness and recovery of sight, but when we proceed by analogy to the spiritual meaning, we will get the same impression from the statement, and we will repeat the same meaning: that the person who is ignorant would have a very good reason to ask the judge for a pardon. However, if someone has a sharp mind and knows what is profitable but sells the inclination of their mind to what is shameful and gives themselves to be conquered by unprofitable pleasures, it would be shameless for that person to ask for mercy. The request to avoid due punishment will not help at all, but the person will perish quite justly for keeping an inexcusable sin within themselves.

Indeed, our Lord Jesus Christ indicates the same thing when he says in the Gospels, "The one who knows the will of their lord, but does not do it, will receive a severe beating."[206] The charge against the one who does not know is ignorance, but for the one who does know and foolishly refuses to do it, the charge is utter contempt. Notice again, in this matter as well, how accurate the Savior's statement is. He does not say in a declarative fashion, "You see," but he says, "You say, 'We see.'" After all, it would have been quite strange to ascribe understanding to those who have a mind so blind and extinguished that they dare to say of him, "We know that this man is a sinner."[207] The Jews, then, condemn themselves when they assert that they see but do nothing at all that they ought to do. Indeed, they condemn themselves most emphatically since they know the will of the Lord, but they think so little of it that they oppose even the noblest miracles. [**208**]

10:1-5 "Truly, truly, I tell you, anyone who does not enter the sheepfold by the gate but climbs in by another way is a thief and a bandit. The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep hear his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. They will not follow a stranger, but they will run from him because they do not know the voice of strangers."

It may well seem to those who do not listen carefully that the parable before us is introduced at the wrong time. He is discussing blindness and restoration of sight, and then he suddenly brings up sheep, a fold and a gate. But the one who has a wise mind and who hastens to apply themselves more diligently to the contemplation of the passage will see that the words travel on a straight course, as it were, and are in no way diverted from what is

[206]Lk 12:47.

[207]Jn 9:24.

appropriate. What I have often said, I will take up again and repeat. It is the custom of Christ the Savior, when any come to him, not only to reply to the words expressed by the voice, but since he sees both the heart and the inner parts,[208] also to defend himself against what they are merely thinking. "For all things are naked and laid bare to him, and no creature is hidden before him."[209] That is why it also says to one of the saints, "Who is this who hides counsel from me and who holds words in his heart, thinking to conceal them from me?"[210]

Now the unholy horde of Pharisees was maliciously asking him whether they too were blind, as we just discussed, so that when he spoke the truth and said they were (blind, that is), they might then charge him with railing against the leaders and **[209]** and speaking ill of those who hold the office of rulers of the people. (They held this position to be something great and extraordinary.) When they do this, our Lord Jesus Christ cogently fights against this idea of theirs and profitably introduces the parable, hinting somewhat obscurely and in riddles that, because of their violence, they would not be secure in their position of leadership, and that this honor would not be granted for very long to those who arrogantly insult God, the giver of it.

He further teaches that this honor will be granted only to those who are called by him to lead the people. He says, then, that he himself is the "gate"[211] and that he brings in by his own will the wise and God-loving man to lead his rational flocks.[212] But whoever thinks they can take by force and violence the honor that is not given to them, he calls a "thief" and a "bandit" and one who "climbs in by another way." Some were like that to whom he refers in one of the Prophets, "They reigned as kings, but not through me; they ruled, but not by my Spirit."[213] With these words he hints that if the leadership of the people is to be a delight to them, they will have to believe and accept the divine decree from him for them to undertake the position so they may possess their rule unshaken and secure. This was indeed the case with the holy apostles and the teachers of the holy churches after them. For them, "the gatekeeper opens," that is, either the angel appointed to preside over the churches and to assist the priests for the benefit of the people, or the Savior himself, who is himself both the "gate" and the Lord of the gate. At any rate, he asserts quite perceptively that the flock of sheep rightly obeys and yields to the voice of the shepherd, but it is very quick to turn away from the voice of strangers. He says this, extending the meaning of the statement to a more general claim, so that you may understand the true point. For we teach in **[210]** the churches by bringing forward doctrines from the divinely inspired Scriptures and by setting out the evangelical and apostolic word as a kind of spiritual food. Those who believe in Christ and who excel with an unswerving faith listen to these words, but they turn away from the voice of the false shepherds and avoid them like the plague.

What then, someone will ask, does this imply about the Pharisees? I will put it in the form of a brief summary and repeat it. He shows himself to be the Lord of the fold, the gate, and the gatekeeper so that they may learn in detail that they will not hold a stable position of leadership unless they come to it through him and so possess that blessing as something given by God. And by adding that the sheep obey their own shepherd but run away from strangers, he cleverly hints that they will never lead those who are going to believe in him, but the sheep will depart from their

[208]Jer 17:10; Rev 2:23.
[209]Heb 4:13.
[210]Job 38:2.
[211]Jn 10:9.
[212]The term "rational flocks" makes it clear that Cyril is referring to people at this point, not to literal sheep.
[213]Hos 8:4; Is 30:1.

teaching and cling to the shepherds appointed by him.

10:6 Jesus spoke this proverb to them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them.

The language of the saints is simple, and far removed from the extravagance of the Greeks. "For God chose what is foolish in the world," as Paul says, "to shame the wise."[214] So he used the term *proverb* because that is what he calls a parable. Perhaps that is because the distinction between the two has always been somewhat confused, and the meaning is understood whether both or just one is used. But we do say this: the divinely inspired Evangelist is astonished by the ignorance of the Jews. As experience itself testifies, they have a mind resembling rocks or iron **[211]** that persistently refuses to accept helpful instruction of any kind. That is why it was said to them through the voice of the prophet Joel, "Rend your heart and not your garments."[215]

Next, it seems to me that the author of the book was not careless when he said, "Jesus spoke this parable to them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them." He announces this with no small emphasis. It is as though he were to say explicitly, The Pharisees are so far from being able to understand what they should, even though they inexplicably consider themselves to be wise, that they did not understand this parable, which is so clear and bright and in which there is nothing difficult, nothing tricky to figure out, and nothing difficult to comprehend. It is appropriate for him to ridicule the Jews' ignorance since they thought nothing of Christ, even though he taught them what was higher than the law and gave them guidance that was much more graceful than that of Moses.

10:7 Then Jesus said to them, "Truly I say to you, I am the gate for the sheep."

He surely knew, since he is God by nature and sees what lies in the depths, that the Pharisee understood nothing he was saying, even though the Pharisee liked to think highly of his own knowledge of the law and was incomparably arrogant in considering himself wise. Therefore, he gave them the clearest possible explanation. He winds up, as it were, the meaning of the whole thing and gives them in a few brief words the point of the proverb. Since he is good by nature, he leads them to **[212]** understanding, even though they do not deserve it, so that perhaps some kind of benefit might illumine them. He says distinctly that he is the "gate for the sheep," teaching something that is generally acknowledged. After all, only through faith in him do we enter into relationship with God. He himself is a witness to this when he says, "No one comes to the Father except through me."[216] So either he intends to indicate something like this, or (which is more appropriate to the passage at hand) he is again clarifying that we come to a position of rule and leadership over the rational flocks through him, in accordance with Paul's statement, "No one takes this honor on himself, but he is called by God."[217] Indeed, no one ever made himself one of the holy prophets, nor will the great and shining chorus of the apostles be found to have called themselves to this office. They were made so by the will of Christ, who called them by name, one by one, into the apostolic office, as he says in the proverb before us. We know how in the Gospel according to Matthew the names of the apostles were placed in order, and immediately thereafter the manner of their designation was added. "These twelve," it says, the Savior appointed, "whom he also named

[214]1 Cor 1:27.
[215]Joel 2:13.
[216]Jn 14:6.
[217]Heb 5:4.

apostles."[218] When he sees that the senseless Pharisee wants to be a ruler and boasts without moderation in the name and fact of leadership, he teaches profitably that he himself is the bestower of leadership, and he is powerful enough to lead people to it without difficulty. Since he is the "gate" of the holy and divine fold, he will admit the one who is fit, but he will block the entrance against one who is not. [**213**]

10:8 "All who came are thieves and bandits, but the sheep did not listen to them."

He employs every kind of enchantment on the obstinate mind of the Pharisees. He lays out a cogent line of reasoning and tries to show them that it is a futile and extremely perilous endeavor to usurp the position of leadership without God's will and the election from above, thinking that they will obtain rule by human foolishness, even though the supplier of that rule wills otherwise. After explicitly stating that he is the "gate," in that he admits only those who are fit into the position of leadership, he immediately contrasts the attempts of people in earlier times so that they may see, sketched as in a picture, the end to which this action leads, and they may then learn the obvious lesson that the position of rule and leadership over the flocks and people comes only through grace from above, and not from despotic attempts at power. His statement here is beneficial, then, as he brings to mind the recollection of those in former times: "All who came are thieves and bandits, but the sheep did not listen to them." Certain men came forward, pretending to have the authority of good shepherds, but since there was no one to bestow leadership on them and to persuade their subjects to obey them, the multitude of sheep trotted away from them.

We must not suppose, however, that just because he said "all," our Savior Jesus Christ is denying the authority of the apostolic office of the holy prophets. His statement is not about them but about others. Since he was addressing false shepherds and those who climb into the sheepfold by another way, the present statement must be about those who were clearly indicated beforehand [**214**]. He says "all," but we should in no way conclude that he is renouncing the standing of the holy prophets. After all, how could he have renounced them when he gives clear evidence of his presence through them, saying, "I multiplied visions, and by means of the prophets I was represented"?[219] He appointed Moses and said to Jeremiah, "Do not say, 'I am too young'; for you shall go to all to whom I send you, and you shall speak whatever I command you."[220] And he said to the blessed Ezekiel, "Son of man, I will send you to the house of Israel, to those who provoke me."[221] Therefore, the statement is not directed against the chorus of the holy prophets but rather against those who at any time pretended to be prophets throughout Judea and who deceitfully claimed to come from God, persuading the people to obey not the true prophets of God but rather to adhere to the machinations and teachings devised by them. Concerning them the Lord himself, who is ruler and God over all, says, "I did not send the prophets, yet they ran. I did not speak to them, yet they prophesied."[222] To the blessed Jeremiah, he says, "The prophets are prophesying lies in my name. I did not send them, nor did I speak to them or command them, for they prophesy to you visions and divinations and prophecies from their own heart. If they are prophets, and if the word of the Lord is in them, let them come before me. What does chaff have to do with

[218]Mt 10:5; Lk 6:13.

[219]Hos 12:10 (Hos 12:11 LXX).
[220]Jer 1:7.
[221]Ezek 2:3.
[222]Jer 23:21.

wheat?"[223] The word that is truly from God has the most nourishing **[215]** power and "strengthens the human heart," as it is written,[224] but that of the unholy false prophets and false teachers is degraded like chaff and conveys no benefit to the hearers. So when he mentions the thieves and bandits who preceded his advent, either he is referring to the lying and deceitful multitude of those we just discussed, or you could take the statement to be about what is written in the Acts of the Apostles. The leaders of the Jews at one point gathered the holy apostles together and brought them into their own lawless council chamber. They wanted to drive them out of Jerusalem and force them into a position of extreme danger, but Gamaliel reminded them of the false prophets, saying, "Men of Israel, consider carefully what you intend to do to these men. For some time ago Theudas rose up, claiming to be great, and a number of men, about four hundred, joined him. But he was killed, and all who followed him dispersed and disappeared. After him Judas the Galilean rose up at the time of the census and got people to follow him; he also perished, and all who followed him were scattered."[225] You see then in these passages, clearly and without a doubt, that Christ says these things not about the holy prophets but about those who have the opposite designation. He wants to persuade the Pharisees, even against their will, not to rely on their own foolish ideas for the ability to bestow on themselves, even against God's will, the leadership of the people, but in all things to subject their authority to divine approval. **[216]** He wants them to be eager to enter through the true gate rather than trying to climb into the sheepfold by another way like plunderers.

10:9 "I am the gate. Whoever enters by me will be saved, and will come in and go out and find pasture."

As usual, he molds the form of his discourse out of the narrative, so to speak, and shapes it into a spiritual contemplation. He takes what is to all appearances simple, presenting practically no difficulties for understanding, and he makes it an image of matters that are more obscure. The thieves and bandits, he says, heedlessly break into the sheep pen. They do not enter by the door, but by leaping in by another way and jumping over the fence of the pen, they put themselves in danger. After all, it is very likely that someone who steals in this way will be caught and arrested for their careless crime. Those who enter through the gate, however, make their entrance completely safe because they are not unfamiliar or unknown to the master of the sheep. The gatekeeper opens the gate for them, and they run in. People such as these, he says, will be with the sheep very openly because they made their entrance in complete conformity with the law, as it were, without any criminality or suspicion of robbery.

This, then, is the type presented by the narrative. However, when we transfer what is hinted at by the narrative into spiritual profit, we say the following: those who climb into a position of rule over the people without God's will and permission, refusing to enter through the gate, as it were, will surely perish also, **[217]** he says. They violate God's judgment, at least according to the intention of what they are trying to do. On the other hand, those who hold leadership because it was given to them by God and who come to it through Christ will rule over the most sacred fold with great openness and grace. They are so far removed from the anger that the others receive that they even receive honor for their work. They will receive crowns from above beyond all their expectations, since their aim is not to mistreat the sheep in any way but rather to benefit

[223]Jer 14:14; 34:18 (LXX); Jer 23:28.
[224]Ps 104:15 (Ps 103:15 LXX).
[225]Acts 5:35-37.

them. They delight in doing what pleases the Lord of the flock, saving by every means those who are under him. With these words the Lord greatly disturbs the unyielding Pharisees, saying that they will not be safe at all but will surely fall from their position of leadership. And this is completely just, since they suppose that they will possess it securely not through God but through their own malice.

It strikes me, though, that even here we should admire the Savior's incomparable love for humanity. "For the Lord is really compassionate and merciful,"[226] setting the way of salvation before everyone, in multiple ways calling to it even those who will not listen and who are hardened. I think the proof of this is found once again in the act itself. When he fails to persuade the Pharisees to accept his word, either through miracles or through the desire for the hope and glory to come, he vigorously proceeds to that which was most likely to trouble them, so that they might finally see belief as an inevitable necessity. He knew that they laid claim to the glory of leadership and that they eagerly counted on no ordinary gain from it, so he says that they would be stripped of and completely bereft of what they so valued **[218]** and what was in their possession, unless they quickly become willing to listen to him and receive pardon from him.

10:10 "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life, and something more."

Christ our Savior said that he was the gate, and he taught that it was up to him both to bring in whomever he wished and to keep out whoever was unfit and incompetent to be a shepherd. He also denounced as thieves and bandits those who entered on their own into a grace that was not given to them from above. Next, the wretched Pharisees asked themselves who this man was who showed such boldness and whether he himself should perhaps be numbered among those whose coming he condemned. They thought that he was a false shepherd and a false ruler, as if he had gained his position by his own will rather than being God who became a human being in accordance with the ancient proclamation of the divinely inspired Scripture. And it is indeed likely that even after they gathered the true knowledge about him, they rejected it because it was intolerable to their unbelief, and they refused to consider anything that was not pleasing or of concern to them, that is, being leaders of the people and being spoken of accordingly. Since he knows that they were thinking these things and whispering them to each other, he defends himself appropriately without waiting for them to accuse him openly. He insists that deeds must be the test of who is the shepherd and who is the thief. He says that it is not difficult at all to distinguish them when one considers the intention and behavior of each. The **[219]** thief comes, he says, to mistreat the animals, since the desire to steal them undoubtedly leads to this outcome. But the shepherd who is actually good will come into the sheep pen not for any malicious purpose but to help the sheep and to work diligently for whatever he thinks will most benefit them.

Now let us bring the force of the statement from an image to the truer meaning, and let the Pharisee consider what those false shepherds and false teachers were doing at that time to those who were cheated by them and, by contrast, what happiness Christ came to give us and raise us to. Now those at that time who did not refrain from false leadership and who pretended to be sent by God and who prophesied "from their own heart and not from the mouth of the Lord," as it is written[227]—along with Theudas and Judas the Galilean,

[226]Ps 111:4 (Ps 110:4 LXX).

[227]Jer 23:16.

who got the people to follow him[228]—were destroyed along with those who were seduced into following them. Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the other hand, came to bestow eternal life on us because he loved us. Their aims were so opposite and the manner of their arrival so different, how could their will and mission not be opposite? Therefore, he says that the quality of the deeds must be the test of who they are and who he is. This is how it was possible to persuade those who were leaders at that time not to draw erroneous conclusions about him—not to think that he was one of the false shepherds or one of those who climb into the sheep pen by another way, but that Christ came as the gate and the gatekeeper and the shepherd, not so that the sheep may simply have life, he says, but something even more.

In addition to the restoration of life to those **[220]** who believe in him, there is also a certain hope of being blessed with all good things. He is probably saying that what is more than life itself, that is, what is fuller and more honorable, is perfect participation in the Spirit, even if his statement is wrapped in secrecy. The restoration of life is common to saints and sinners, Greeks and Jews, and to us ourselves. "For the dead shall rise, and those who are in the tombs shall be raised, and those who are on the earth shall rejoice,"[229] according to the truthful promise of the Savior. Participation in the Holy Spirit, on the other hand, is not common to all, but it is "more" than life and is classified as being beyond what is common to all. It will be ascribed only to those who are justified by faith in Christ. The divine Paul makes this same point to us when he says, "Behold, I tell you a mystery! We will all sleep, but we will not all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead in Christ will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed."[230] All the dead will rise because of the gift given to our entire nature on account of the grace of the resurrection. And in one, that is, in Christ, who was in the beginning, and who was the first to break the power of death and bring about unending life, the common lot of humanity was transformed to incorruptibility, just as in one, that is, in the first Adam, it was condemned to death and decay. But there will be a significant distinction between those who are raised at that time, and the difference between them will be great. Those who have gone to their rest with faith in Christ and who have received the first installment of the Spirit during their life in the flesh[231] **[221]** will obtain the most perfect grace and will be changed to the glory that will be given by God. But those who do not believe in the Son and who think nothing of such an excellent reward will then be condemned by his voice. They will share with others only the return to life, and they will pay a penalty for such deep unbelief. They will go down to Hades to be punished and experience unavailing regret. "For there," he says, "there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."[232]

10:11 "I am the good shepherd."

He had previously shown quite fittingly and clearly how many evils were inflicted on the ancients by the hypocrisy of the false prophets and false shepherds, and he made clear the benefits of his own advent. Then, by comparing the sheep themselves, he carried off the victory and was crowned by the decree of the truth. Now he appropriately utters, "I am the good shepherd." In vain, then, do you plot against me, he says. You cannot charge that I want to harm the sheep in any way, yet you do not hesitate to number me among those who

[228]Acts 5:36-37.
[229]Is 26:19.
[230]1 Cor 15:51-52.
[231]2 Cor 1:22.
[232]Mt 8:12.

are accustomed to doing precisely that. You say that he who is truly good is evil, and because of your self-love, you lose the ability to judge each matter rightly, in accordance with the ordinances of the lawgiver. Therefore, he rebukes the leaders as unjust, as completely unacquainted with the words of Moses, as ignorant of the purpose of his arrival, so that the prophet Isaiah is found to tell the truth about them. "Woe," he says, "to those who call evil good and good evil, to those who call sweet bitter and bitter sweet, to those who put light for darkness and **[222]** darkness for light."[233] Will they not be caught doing this when they put the true light (that is, our Lord Jesus Christ) for darkness by placing our good shepherd in the same category as the so-called shepherds, and perhaps even dare to give him less honor than them? Those who claimed the divine word for themselves, who plundered the mind of the flocks under the guise of prophecy and stole them away from the road that leads to the truth, who let them stray wherever they wanted but not where God wanted—such people were held in high esteem by those who pretended to be in power at the time. For example, Shemaiah the Salamite[234] put his own fables in opposition to the word of God and emboldened himself to attack Jeremiah's reputation. Jeremiah was in chains, while Shemaiah was honored by Zedekiah as a reward for his falsehood. And now the wretched Pharisees go far beyond the godlessness of those people. They disgrace themselves with an even higher degree of insolence and ascribe to Christ not even the rank of the false teachers. After all, what do they say about him to those who are listening to his word with pleasure? "He has a demon and is out of his mind. Why do you listen to him?"[235] That is why he says through the prophet Isaiah about them, "Woe to them, for they have strayed from me! Wretched are they, for they have been irreverent toward me! I have redeemed them, yet they have spoken lies about me."[236] And again, "Their rulers will fall by the sword because of the ignorance of their tongue."[237] Are they not worthy of every punishment who have foolishly sharpened their tongue to such a point that they dare to make accusations against Christ that are not at all becoming for us to admit into our ears or heedlessly repeat, but only for their followers? **[223]**

10:11-13 "The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. The hired hand, who is not the shepherd and who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and runs away—and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. The hired hand runs away because a hired hand does not care for the sheep."

He had skillfully compared the brightness of his own deeds with the endless talk and lawless daring of some. He then unmasked them and called them bandits and thieves, who climb into the sheep pen by another way, while he called himself the shepherd who is truly good. He now moves on to the leaders of the Jews and shows that his own leadership is better than that of the Pharisees. By a comparison, he makes the proof crystal clear to them. He contrasts his own love and watchfulness with their indifference. He accuses them of caring nothing for the flock, while he says that his concern for the flock reached such a point that he despised his own life, which is what everyone holds most dear. Then he defines how one ought to test a good shepherd. He declares that such a shepherd must not hesitate to give up his very life in fighting for the salvation of the flock—a condition that was indeed fulfilled by Christ.

[233]Is 5:20.
[234]Jer 36:24.
[235]Jn 10:20.
[236]Hos 7:13.
[237]Hos 7:16.

The human race had wandered off from love for God and inclined toward sin. They were therefore banished from the sacred divine sheep pen, I mean the precincts of paradise. Falling ill because of the calamity wrought by the devil (who tricked them into sin) and death (which sprouted from sin), they fell prey to wolves that were truly bitter and implacable. But when Christ was shown to be the good shepherd of all, he laid down his life for us **[224]** in the struggle against this pair of wild beasts. He endured the cross for us in order to kill death, and he was condemned for us in order to deliver all people from condemnation for their sin, nullifying through faith the tyranny of sin and "nailing the record that stood against us to his cross," as it is written.[238] Now the father of sin laid us down "like sheep in Hades" and entrusted us to death as our shepherd, as it is said in the Psalms.[239] But the true good shepherd died for us that he might rescue us from the dark pit of death and prepare to add us to the flock of the company of heaven and grace us with mansions above in the presence of the Father, instead of pens situated in the depths of the abyss and the caverns under the sea. That is why he says to us somewhere, "Do not be afraid, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."[240] The sheep tended by Christ are in this condition.

Now let us examine the condition of the sheep that belong to those others. If anyone judges them fairly from a correct perspective, they will surely be unmasked as nothing other than hired hands and false shepherds and wretches and traitors and cowards, who never give any consideration for the welfare of the sheep but who are eager to procure by any means whatever happens to seem pleasurable to each of them individually. They were "hired hands," as the Savior puts it, and the sheep did not belong to them. No, the sheep belonged to Christ, who hired them from the beginning and selected the priests for the highest honors and for positions of leadership over the Jewish people. But they [dishonored] so illustrious [a position],[241] completely neglected the sheepfold, and handed the sheep over to the wolf. **[225]** And we will briefly explain how they did it. In ancient times, the numerous people of the Jews had God alone as their king. To him they paid the half-shekel.[242] To him they performed sacrifices and brought what was required by the law as a kind of tribute. But a man of a foreign race came upon them like a savage wolf. He imposed on them the name and the reality of slavery and placed on them the yoke of human rule. He forcibly brought them into a life without the law, to which they were not accustomed, demanding tribute and plundering the kingdom of God. Of course, when they were reduced to such a level of distress, they had to submit to the decrees of their conqueror. The foreigner arrived and abrogated the rule of God, that is, the tribe allotted to serve as priests, to whom God had entrusted judgment and adjudication. He changed everything by force, put his own face on the coins, and committed every kind of violence. The shepherds were not vigilant against such intolerable arrogance. They saw "the wolf coming," and they left the flock and ran away, since the sheep did not belong to them. They did not call on the one who could come to their defense, who saved them from the Babylonians, who overthrew the Assyrian, who slew "one hundred eighty-five thousand"[243] foreigners by the hand of the angel.

The acceptance of the rule of a stranger (I mean the rule of those of a foreign race) harmed the Israelites in no small degree and

[238]Col 2:14.
[239]Ps 49:14 (Ps 48:15 LXX).
[240]Lk 12:32.
[241]Something seems to be missing from the manuscript at this point. See Pusey 4:224 n. 25.
[242]Mt 17:24.
[243]Is 37:36.

paralyzed them with timidity. You can see this from the following incident. Once Pilate rebuked the Jews for their irrational audacity, when they urged that the Lord be crucified, saying publicly, "Shall I crucify your king?"[244] **[226]** Then—then they shook off their subjection to God and burst the bonds of their ancient allegiance. They subjected themselves to a new yoke, as it were, crying out with abandon, "We have no king but Caesar!"[245] Moreover, what the people did and shouted seemed right and proper to their leaders, so we must assign to them the cause for all the ill that the people suffered. They are condemned, and quite rightly, as betrayers of the sheep, as unmanly wretches who utterly delight in controversy but who completely refuse to protect and defend the sheep under their care. Therefore, God also condemns them, saying, "The shepherds became stupid and did not seek the Lord. Therefore, all their flock was ignorant and was scattered."[246] By events themselves, then, it is clear that Christ is truly the good shepherd of the sheep, while the others are corrupt (rather than good) shepherds and are completely disqualified from any praise for being genuine.

10:14 "I am the good shepherd."

Next he exults over obtaining the victorious decree that he should be appointed as leader of the Jews. This decree was not announced by the testimony of any but by the very investigation of the facts just undertaken. After he contrasted his own works with the evil done by the false prophets and demonstrated that the outcome of his accomplishments was better than that of their lies (since he says that they came, self-appointed, only to steal and kill and destroy, to lie and to say what is not right, but he came so that the sheep may not only have life but **[227]** something more)—after all that, he announced beautifully and correctly, "I am the good shepherd." So also here, after he defined the truly good shepherd as one who is ready to die for the sheep and is willing to lay down his life for them, and he defined the hired hand as a foreign ruler and a wretch and a deserter and any of the names we have already mentioned, he cries out for good reason, "I am the good shepherd!" since he knows that he is going to lay down his life for the sheep. He who is first in all things had to—had to—prevail over everyone so that the psalmist may be proven right when he says to him somewhere, "so that you may be justified when you speak and victorious when you are judged."[247]

In addition to what I have just discussed, we must also consider the following. For my part, I think that the Lord set before the Jewish people teachings intended for their great benefit not only with his own words but also through the utterances of the prophets. He wanted to persuade them to embrace right thinking and to know clearly that he is the good shepherd and the others are not. Where did he do this? After all, it would not be unreasonable to suppose that even if they are not persuaded by his words, they would acknowledge, even against their will, the words of the prophets. So he says, "I am the good shepherd," to remind the Jews, as it were, of the statement made by the voice of Ezekiel the prophet. He says this concerning Christ and those who are charged with leading the flock of the Jews: "Thus says the Lord God, 'O shepherds of Israel, do shepherds feed themselves? Do not shepherds feed the sheep? Behold, you consume the milk, you clothe yourselves with the wool, you slaughter the fat ones, but **[228]** you do not feed my sheep. You have not strengthened the weak, you have not healed the sick, you have not bound up the

[244]Jn 19:15.
[245]Jn 19:15.
[246]Jer 10:21.
[247]Ps 51:4 (Ps 50:6 LXX).

injured, you have not brought back the straying, you have not sought the lost, and you have afflicted the strong with hardship. My sheep were scattered because there was no shepherd, and they became food for all the wild animals. My sheep were scattered on every mountain, on every high hill, and over the face of the whole earth, and there was no one to seek them out and bring them back.'"[248] The one aim of the rulers of the Jews was to focus on their own gain. They made money off of the offerings of their subjects, they collected tribute, and they imposed burdens over and above the law. But when it came to what would benefit or be able to save the people under their care, they gave no thought to that. Therefore, the truly good shepherd says this to them: "Thus says the Lord God, 'Behold, I am against the shepherds, and I will take my sheep out of their hands. I will stop them from shepherding my sheep, and the shepherds will no longer feed them. I will rescue my sheep from their mouth, and they will no longer be food for them.'"[249] And again later, "I will raise up for them one shepherd, my servant David, and he will shepherd them. He will be their shepherd, and I, the Lord, will be their God, with David ruling in their midst. I, the Lord, have spoken. I will make with David a covenant **[229]** of peace and banish dangerous animals from the land. The people will dwell in the desert and sleep in the woods. I will settle them around my mountain. I will give you rain, the rain of blessing, and the trees of the plain will yield their fruit, and the earth will yield its fruit."[250] In these words, God declares quite properly and clearly that the unholy multitude of the Pharisees will be removed from leadership of the Jews, and he openly decrees that after them, Christ, who is of the seed of David according to the flesh, will rule over the rational flock of believers. After all, he established a covenant of peace, that is, the evangelical and divinely inspired proclamation that raises us to love for God and obtains the kingdom of heaven. Likewise through him comes the rain of blessing, that is, the first fruits of the Spirit that make a fruitful land, as it were, of whatever soul in which they dwell. Since the Pharisees badly mistreated the sheep, not feeding them but allowing them to be tormented in many ways, Christ rescued them and was shown to be the giver and supplier of blessing from above. What he says he is, then, is obviously reasonable: "I am the good shepherd."

Now let no one find it a stumbling block, I ask you, when God the Father calls him who became human from the seed of David a "servant," even though by nature he is God and a true Son. Rather, one should recognize that he humbled himself, assuming the form of a servant.[251] It is therefore fitting that God the Father refers to him by the form that was assumed. **[230]**

10:14-15 "I know my own and my own know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father."

Without giving sufficient attention to this statement, someone might say that the Lord intends to communicate nothing other than this: that he will be well-known to his own, and he will freely bestow knowledge of himself on those who believe in him; and that he will recognize his own, implying that knowledge of him will not be without profit for those who attain it. After all, what could we say is better than being known by God? But since the statement demands closer scrutiny, especially because of the addition of "just as the Father knows me and I know the Father," come, let us go through the meaning of the passage.

[248]Ezek 34:2-6.
[249]Ezek 34:10.
[250]Ezek 34:23-27.
[251]Phil 2:7.

I do not think that anyone alive who has a sound mind would claim to be able to attain the knowledge of Christ that we may suppose God the Father has. The Father alone knows his own offspring, and he is known by his offspring alone. "For no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows what the Father is except the Son," as the Savior himself says.[252] That the Father is God and the Son is likewise true God, we both know and believe. But what the ineffable nature is in its essence is completely inaccessible to us and the other rational creatures.[253] How then will we know the Son just like the Father does? We must consider in what sense he means that he will know us and that he will be known by us, just as he knows the Father, and the Father knows him.

Now we must investigate what meaning we will assign to these words so as not to carry them away from the intent of the passage. **[231]** We must look for that, and I for my part will not conceal anything that comes into my mind. If anyone wants to accept what I say, they may do so. I think that the "knowledge" in this passage does not refer simply to intellectual knowledge, but it stands for a relationship, either in terms of nature and kinship or in terms of participation in grace and honor. It is the custom of Greek children to say they "know" not only their extended family but also their siblings by blood. That the divine Scripture too uses "knowledge" to refer to relationship, we will learn through the following. Christ says somewhere of those who had no relationship to him, "Many will say to me on that day," that is, the day of judgment, "'Lord, Lord, did we not work many miracles and cast out demons in your name?' Then I will declare to them, 'Truly I tell you, I never knew you.'"[254] But if "knowledge" refers only to intellectual knowledge, how is it that there are any he did not know, since he has all things "naked and laid bare before his eyes," as it is written,[255] and "he knows all things before they come to be"?[256] Therefore, it is completely lacking in knowledge, or rather lacking in godliness, to suppose that the Lord is without knowledge of anyone. Instead, we should think that he is saying that they are in no way related or associated with him. I do not know them, he says, to have been lovers of virtue or to have honored my word or to have joined themselves with me by good works. You should apply the foregoing also to the all-wise Moses, when God says to him, "I know you above all others, and you have found favor from me."[257] It is as though he said, "You have been placed in relationship to me above all others, and you have found much favor."

Now when we say this, we are not removing all reference to intellectual knowledge from "knowledge," but we are thinking in a way that is more appropriate to the **[232]** meaning. Therefore, he says, "I know my own and I am known by my own, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father," which stands for, "I will be brought into relationship with my sheep and my sheep will be related to me, in the same way that the Father is related to me and I am related to the Father." Just as God the Father knows his own Son, the fruit of his nature, and holds him to be a genuine offspring, and the Son in turn knows the Father and holds him to be true God, since he is begotten of him; so also we, since we were brought into relation with him, are referred to as his offspring and called his children in accordance with his statement, "Behold, I and the children God has given me."[258] We both are and are called genuine offspring of the Son, and on account of him kindred of the Father as

[252]Mt 11:27.
[253]See Cyril's discussion of our knowledge of God on p. 18 above.
[254]Mt 7:22-23.
[255]Heb 4:13.
[256]Sus 1:42.
[257]Ex 33:12.
[258]Is 8:18.

well, since the only begotten God, who is from God, became a human being, assuming our very nature, though without any sin.[259] Otherwise, how are we "God's offspring,"[260] and in what way are we "participants of the divine nature"?[261] After all, our boast is not in the mere will of Christ to bring us into a relationship with him, but the power of that event is realized in all of us. The Word of God, even in the flesh, is a divine nature; and we are his offspring, even though he is God by nature, because he assumed our very flesh. The concept of relationship works in a similar way. As he is related to the Father and the Father is related to him because of the identity of their nature, so also we are related to him in that he became a human being, and he is related to us. Through him, as through a mediator, we are joined to the Father. Christ is a kind of boundary between the highest divinity and humanity. He is both in the same person, combining in himself, so to speak, **[233]** these natures which are so different. As God by nature, he is joined to God the Father, and as a true human being, he is joined to humanity.

But perhaps someone will say, Do you see, sir, where your statement is in danger of leading you? If we think that he knows his own (that is, he came into relationship with his sheep) in that he became a human being, who remains outside the flock? All people will be related to him since they are human just like he is. Why then does he still use the superfluous term *mine*? What is uniquely excellent about those who belong to him? After all, if everyone is related for the reason we have already mentioned, what more will there be for those whom he knows?

To this we reply, the manner of the relationship is common to all, both to those who know him and to those who do not know him. After all, he became a human being not to give grace to some and not to others but to take pity on our entire fallen nature. This kind of relationship, however, will be of no benefit to those who are haughty in their unbelief. Rather, it will be assigned, like an excellent reward, to those who love him. It is like the resurrection. The resurrection extends to all people because of the Savior's resurrection, who raised the entire human nature along with him. It will be of no use, however, to those who are devoted to sin. They will go down to Hades and receive a restoration to life only to be punished. But it will be of great benefit to those who have practiced the more excellent way of life, since they will receive resurrection in order to participate in blessings beyond the imagination. In the same way, I think, being related to him extends to all people, both the wicked and the good, but it is not the same for everyone. For those who believe in him, it is the beginning of a true family relation and all that comes with it, but for those who are otherwise, it stands as a bitter accusation of their thanklessness and unholiness. **[234]** That is what we think about it. Let anyone who can do so figure out a better explanation.

Now, however, we must observe how his statement is true and sure. We see that he does not confuse matters but puts each one in its proper and most fitting place. He does not say, "My own know me and I know my own," but first he says that he knows his own sheep, and then he says that he is thus known by them. If we take knowledge as intellectual acquaintance, as we said in the beginning was a possibility,[262] you should understand it like this: We did not first acknowledge him, but he first acknowledged us. Paul writes something similar to the Gentiles when he says, "So then, remember that at one time you Gentiles by birth, called the 'uncircumcision' by those called the 'circumcision'—a circumcision in the

[259]Heb 4:15.
[260]Acts 17:29.
[261]2 Pet 1:4.

[262]See above, p. 66.

flesh done by human hands—remember that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ."[263] In his limitless kindness, Christ introduced himself to the Gentiles, and he knew them before they knew him.

If, however, you understand "knowledge" to mean relationship or kinship,[264] then we say this: It was not we who initiated this knowledge but the only begotten God, who is from God. After all, we did not pursue the divinity above our nature, but he who is by nature God laid hold of the seed of Abraham, as Paul says, and became a human being in order to become like his brothers in all things except sin and to bring into relationship those who did not have it of themselves, that is, humanity.[265] **[235]** Accordingly, then, he says that he knew us first, and then we knew him.

"And I lay down my life for the sheep." He is prepared to provide every kind of protection for those who are now related and kin to him. He even promises that he is ready to put himself in jeopardy, proving by taking this on himself that he really is the good shepherd. Those who abandon the sheep to the wolves were deservedly called wretches and hired hands because of it. But he, since he knew that he had to fight for the sheep to the point of not shrinking from death itself, should for good reason be considered the good shepherd. When he says, "I lay down my life for the sheep" because "I am the good shepherd," he subtly rebukes the Pharisees and perhaps makes them understand that they are going to rage so intensely and reach such a pitch of madness against him that they will clothe with death him who least deserves it, but who should be considered worthy of all praise and admiration, both for the deeds that he did and for his excellent skill at shepherding.

Yet we must also make clear that when Christ endured death for us and in our place, he did so not against his will, but he came to it willingly, even though he could easily have escaped it if he did not want to suffer. Therefore, we may see the beauty of his love toward us and the immensity of his kindness to us in the fact that he suffered voluntarily. **[236]**

10:16 "I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock and one shepherd."

In many ways he rattles the unruly Pharisees. In many of his statements he implies that they will be driven out from their rule over the sheep almost immediately, or rather that he himself will rule and lead. He hints that he will combine the flock of the Gentiles with those of Israel who are more favorably disposed toward him, and he will rule not only the flock of Israel, but he will then extend the light of his glory to the whole earth, and he will call people everywhere to the knowledge of God. He will not allow himself to be known only in Judea,[266] as in former times, but he will set before every nation under heaven the knowledge that leads to the enjoyment of a true acquaintance with God.

One may very easily learn that Christ was appointed as the guide of the Gentiles to godliness. The divinely inspired Scripture is full of testimonies to that effect, so perhaps it would not be unreasonable to pass over this and leave it to the more diligent students to search it out. Nevertheless, in what follows I will mention two or three statements in the

[263]Eph 2:11-13.
[264]See above, p. 66.
[265]Heb 2:16-17.
[266]Ps 76:1 (Ps 75:2 LXX).

prophets about this. God the Father says somewhere concerning him, "Behold, I have given him as a witness to the Gentiles, a leader and commander for the Gentiles."[267] That is because Christ bore witness to the Gentiles by giving them saving knowledge and telling them forthrightly what they needed in order to be saved. And the divine psalmist, as if calling people everywhere into one company and commanding every land under the sun to gather together for the heavenly banquet, says, "Clap your hands, you Gentiles; shout to God with a voice of exultation."[268] Now if it seems good to any to look into the cause of such a glorious and epic assembly, they can find it expressed clearly: "For God is king of all the earth; sing praises with understanding; God reigns over all the Gentiles."[269] And somewhere he introduces the Lord himself announcing in his own words the gospel proclamation to all the Gentiles together. In the Forty-Eighth Psalm he says, "Hear this, all you Gentiles; listen all you inhabitants of the world, you who are of the race of earth and the children of human beings, rich and poor alike. My mouth will speak wisdom, and the meditation of my heart will be understanding."[270] After all, what will anyone say is wiser than gospel teaching? How will we find anything spoken with more understanding than the lessons that come through Christ? Now this statement leads us back to what we said at the beginning. It explicitly foretells that the multitude of the Gentiles will be gathered together into one flock with the converted of Israel.

However, someone who is investigating the meaning of this passage very carefully might ask, Why does the Savior reveal mysteries when he is addressing the leaders of the Jews and speaking with men whose hearts are burning with hatred and envy? Why, tell me, did those kind of people need to know that he would rule the Gentiles and that he would gather into his own fold sheep from outside Judea? What then shall we say to this? What answer shall we give? He does not share mysteries with them as friends, but neither does he think that explaining these matters to them is pointless. He shares these mysteries with them because he knew that this would benefit them as much as anything he could do. That was his object, even if the mind of his hearers, which was completely unreachable and disinclined to believe, remained obstinate. He knew that they were familiar with the writing of Moses and the declarations of the holy prophets, **[238]** and in the prophets there are frequent, abundant statements that the Christ would catch the Gentiles in his net to bring them to the knowledge of God. That is why he set the matter before them as a clear sign that he was one who was clearly announced ahead of time. He explicitly asserted that he would also call the sheep that are not of the fold of the Jews so that, as we just said, they might believe that he is really the one about whom the chorus of holy men prophesied.

10:17 "For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life in order to take it up again."

He often answers not only words expressed by the tongue but also thoughts deep in the mind. Since he is true God, he has clear knowledge of everything. Now the unholy Jews mocked his words when he promised to fight so fervently for his sheep that he was ready to lay down his life for them. They thought he was talking nonsense and that he was insane. Accordingly, he shows those who mock him out of their unbounded ignorance and godlessness that they are guilty of dishonoring in word and deed what God the Father deems worthy of great honor. He loves me, he says, for the very thing that you in

[267]Is 55:4.
[268]Ps 47:1 (Ps 46:2 LXX).
[269]Ps 47:7-8 (Ps 46:8-9 LXX).
[270]Ps 49:1-3 (Ps 48:2-4 LXX).

your great ignorance deride. How, then, are you not arrogant and utterly ungodly when you say that what God finds most pleasing should be ridiculed? He suggests to them through these words that they are detested by God. After all, if God loves the one who lays down his life for the sheep of the fold committed to his care, it is of course altogether necessary to conclude that he detests the one **[239]** who "sees the wolf coming," abandons the flock to the raging predator and turns to flee. And that is exactly what Christ was convicting the rulers of the Jewish people (or flock) of doing. So at the same time he also convicts them of being detestable to God and irreverent because they do not shrink back from ridiculing what God sees as most deserving of honor.

Furthermore, Christ insists that he is loved by God not only because he lays down his life but because he lays down his life "in order to take it up again." In this fact, of course, the magnitude of the blessings he obtained for us shines brightly. After all, if he had merely died and had not risen again, what more would there be than that? How would he have benefited our nature if he had remained dead along with us, subject to the bonds of death and under the tyranny of decay (which is foreign to him) along with everyone else? But since he laid down his life "in order to take it up again," he saved our entire nature in this way. He nullified the power of death, and he will make us into a new creation.

Now the Son is loved by God the Father not as though he would remain outside that love if his work for us had not been done. No, he was loved always and at all times. We will proceed to explain this claim. Qualities that inhere in natures or happen to be possessed by them are most clearly manifested when they are brought to actuality. Fire, for example, possesses its heat by nature, but when it acts on wood, that is when we see what kind of power it has and how great that power is. Likewise someone who has obtained knowledge of grammar, let's say, or some other such discipline, would not be admired when silent, I think, but rather when they display the excellence of their learning for others to see. So it is with the divine and ineffable **[240]** nature. When it actualizes any of its qualities or natural properties, that is when it shows itself more clearly for what it is and is thereby perceived by us as well. For instance, Wisdom says in the book of Proverbs, "I was the one in whom he rejoiced; every day I was delighted, being always in his presence, when he was taking delight at completing the world and in the human race,"[271] even though God possesses continual joy and endless delight. Surely nothing grieves him who has authority over all, yet he rejoiced in his own Wisdom when he completed the world. When he saw the energy of his own Wisdom exhibited in his work, that was when he thought it was fitting to rejoice more lavishly. That is how we should understand this passage as well. God the Father is love, as John says,[272] and he is not only good, but he is goodness itself. When he saw his own Son laying down his life for us out of love for us and preserving the exact imprint of the sheer goodness of the Father's nature, it was reasonable for the Father to love him. He did not grant him his love as some kind of reward for what he had done for us, but, as we have said, he saw the genuine characteristic of his own nature in the Son, and he was drawn to this by necessary and unavoidable impulses of nature, as it were. If one of us happens to see the precise imprint of our own form in our child, we are raised to the height of love most especially when we see this. In the same way, I think, God the Father says that he loves his Son as he lays down his life for us and takes it up again. After all, it is the work of love to choose even to suffer, **[241]**

[271] Prov 8:30-31.
[272] 1 Jn 4:8.

and to suffer in a humiliating way, for the salvation of some—and not only to die, but also to take up the life he laid down in order to kill death and to drive away the sorrow that comes from decay. Therefore, although he is always loved because of his nature, he should also be understood to be loved in the sense that by his love toward us he pleases his Father, since in this very act, the Father is able to see the image of his own nature shining forth in utter clarity with no alteration.

Since as God he knew the thoughts of the Jews, and he saw them mocking what he said about dying for the sheep, he shows by their words that they are so ungodly that they mock the very things God the Father dearly loves. God loves these things because in them he sees the image of his own nature remaining clear in his incarnate Son and shining forth without alteration.

Here ends book six of Saint Cyril.[273] **[243]**

[273]The text in italics is not part of Pusey's Greek text but is fragment #1 in Joseph Reuss, *Johannes-Kommentare aus der griechischen Kirche*, Texte und Untersuchungen 89 (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1966), 188. These fragments have been included in this translation for the sake of completeness. Since they are fragments, there is usually no clear indication of where they should be placed in the context of the discussion of the verse they pertain to. Therefore, they have been inserted where it seemed most natural.

BOOK SEVEN

(Fragments)[1]

10:18 "No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again."

Here, you see, he teaches not only that is he the good shepherd who risks his life for the flock, but he is God by nature. Therefore, he would not have experienced death if he were not willing, since he has God-befitting power over this *oikonomia*, which holds such great benefit for us. Indeed, the structure of his statement communicates even to the Jews that they were never going to prevail over him if he were not willing. He said, "I have power," not only regarding laying down his life, but he added "I have power" with reference both to his death and resurrection. That way, his accomplishment is clearly not achieved by the power or activity of another, **[244]** as if it were granted to him as a delegated power of his office as a minister or servant. Instead, it displays as a fruit of his nature the power to exercise authority over the bonds of death and to transform the nature of things effortlessly however he wants. That is truly the characteristic of him who is God by nature. This, then, is what he intends to make clear by saying, "I have power to lay down my life, and I have power to take it up." He came to this act willingly, not because he was commanded as a slave or servant, and not because he was forced or compelled by anyone.

"This command I received from my Father." So that no one may say that the Father is unable to restore the Son's life without the Son's permission—thereby introducing factions and division into the one divine nature of the Father and the Son—he says, "I have received the command." He is showing that the Father thinks and wills the same as he does on this point, and he confesses that they arrive at this point with one accord, since he himself is the counsel of the Father. And this is consistent with his *oikonomia* in the flesh as well.

By saying that he received what seemed right to the Father in the form of a command, he is not making himself inferior to the Father (since he is by nature God), but is simply observing what is fitting for the incarnation. Besides that, when he says that he has received the will that he shares with God the Father as a "command," he is subtly calling to mind that he is the prophet of whom the Father said, "He will speak just as I command him."[2] He said this to the Jews so they would not think that he is saying anything contrary to the **[245]** decrees of the Father. Now do not be troubled that the Father called his consubstantial Son a prophet. When he became a human being, then the name *prophet* was fitting for him. Then we say that commands were given to him in the *oikonomia* by God the Father.

Furthermore, the one who receives commands is not thereby inferior or dissimilar to the nature of the one issuing the commands. After all, human beings give commands to other human beings and angels give commands to other angels, and we do not say that those receiving the commands are thereby of a different nature or inferior. Therefore, neither is the Son inferior to the Father, even though he became human in order to become the pattern of all virtue for us. This also teaches us that we ought to obey our parents in all things, even though we are equal to them as far as our nature is concerned.[3] It is also the case

[1]Pusey's text consists of the compilation of extant Greek fragments with a few fragments in Syriac from Severus of Antioch. In addition to these, I have added fragments collected by Reuss from later catenae. The Reuss fragments and the Syriac fragments are set off in italics.

[2]Deut 18:18.

[3]Cf. Cyril's comments on Jn 6:38-39 (vol. 1, p. 221).

that in some places where the word *command* is used of the Father, it means, "deal with appropriately," as when he says, "I will command the whole world for their evil deeds and the ungodly for their sins."[4]

There are also times when the Son condescends in his speaking to help us understand, as much as possible, his ineffable utterances. Yet saying "I received a command" does not make him who is by nature God cease to be God. So either state that he is God and grant that he has all attributes appropriate to the divine nature, or state plainly that he is a creature. The reception of a command does not strip anyone of what belongs to them by nature. Since the Son speaks whatever the Father commanded him, and he says, "I and the Father are one,"[5] you must say either that the Father commanded the Son to tell the truth or to lie. After all, the Son speaks what he is commanded to speak. "The Father who sent me," he says, "has given me a commandment about what to say and what to speak."[6] And when he says, "The Father is greater than I,"[7] there is no contradiction. In that he is God by nature, he is equal to the Father, **[246]** but in that he became human and humbled himself, he speaks words that are appropriate to human nature, in accordance with the *oikonomia*. Nevertheless, since the term *command* is external to one's substance, it could not be made into an objection against one's substance. After all, the essence of the Son does not consist in the Father commanding him, nor could this ever become the definition of his substance. Now the Son knows, since he is the counsel and wisdom of the Father, what is fittingly determined by him. And if he receives it as a command, do not be surprised by this. He uses human words to refer to something beyond our capacity for expression. He is taking what cannot be uttered in our speech and bringing it down to our mode of expression so that we too can understand it. Therefore, let us blame not the inconsistency of the meaning but the weakness of the words, which cannot reach the true description and accurate interpretation of the realities, as they ought.

10:19-21 Again a division arose among the Jews because of these words. Many of them were saying, "He has a demon and is out of his mind. Why listen to him?" Others were saying, "These are not the words of one who has a demon. Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?"

The Savior's word goes down into the heart of the hearers, and when it finds hearts that are more yielding, it immediately molds and shapes them into a good disposition; but when it meets hard hearts it turns away and departs, in a manner of speaking. Therefore, the one whose mind is prepared for wisdom receives the saving word gladly, while the one whose mind is not prepared does not receive it.

Something like this happens to the Jewish people. When they hear the Savior's words, **[247]** they are divided into two opinions. The more perceptive of them at once turn toward the beginning of salvation, but the hard-hearted are worse off than they were in the beginning. And the divinely inspired Evangelist is astonished, as it were, that a division occurred among the Jewish people because of these words. I think it is obvious that he is marveling at the hardness of the unbelievers when he says, "A division arose among the Jews because of these words"—the words that, he says, should have utterly convinced the Jews that he was the Christ. The words of the Savior were that wonderful. But when even these words were spoken to them that were likely to ensnare even the very hard to catch in the net of faith, "a division arose among them."

[4]Is 13:11.
[5]Jn 10:30.
[6]Jn 12:49.
[7]Jn 14:28.

So he is astonished that they wickedly incline toward shameless disregard for his words. I think it is just to accuse them to the same degree that our Savior's statement should rightly be admired. What he said was God-befitting and surpassed humanity. But the glory of his superhuman words and the God-befitting boldness of his speech drive the common people to sheer madness. Since those who were truly demon possessed often blasphemed quite readily (inasmuch as they were raving mad and entirely out of their mind), and since they thought that the Lord was a mere man, not realizing that he was God by nature, they called him demon possessed, assuming that he was committing outright blasphemy. After all, they heard him saying what would only be fitting for God to say. Since he looked to them like one of us, and they did not yet understand who he was by nature, they thought he was blaspheming whenever he said anything God-befitting. That is why, in accordance with the *oikonomia* and on account of the weakness of his hearers, he often condescends **[248]** to use our manner of speech.

The Jewish people, then, are divided. Some, knowing nothing at all about the mystery concerning him, are unholy and insolent. Others have a more reasonable disposition and do not condemn him rashly, but as they ruminate on his words and test them carefully, they detect a hint of sweetness in them. And so they make a well-examined judgment and do not ascribe words that are sober and full of the highest wisdom to babbling demons. Those demons, as they drive people mad, normally say things that are inappropriate. That means the Pharisees were really the ones who were demon possessed, since they applied that description to him who was free of all disease. They did not realize that they were revealing their own disease and that, in their ignorance, they were quick to describe the evil that controlled them. I, at least, think it was extremely wicked of them to say that the Lord had a demon. When he condemned them as horrible shepherds and hired hands (since they abandoned the sheep to the wolf and showed little concern at all for the flock)[8] they were terrified that the people would understand what he was saying and no longer allow themselves to be shepherded by them but run to be Christ's disciples. Therefore, they tried to deceive the flock and said, "He has a demon. Why listen to him?" But though they spoke these words with guile, their plan had the opposite effect. "Others" judged the Lord's words to be right because of the quality of those words, since they were not the sort of words a demoniac would say. Besides that, says one, the miracles present an unimpeachable testimony. Even if you condemn the words for not being spoken well, it is impossible that the same person both has a demon and does what only God can **[249]** do. By his fruits, then, along with their admiration for his words, did the legitimate judges recognize him.

"Others were saying, 'These are not the words of one who has a demon,'" etc. From the quality of his words, they make the right decision. It would be madness to claim that the one who says this "has a demon and is out of his mind. Why listen to him?" That is because the good shepherd will die without hesitation and eagerly put himself in danger for his sheep, while the "hired hand who is not a shepherd"[9] *will freeze and run away at the mere sight of the wolf.*[10]

10:22-23 The Festival of the Dedication took place in Jerusalem. It was winter; and Jesus was walking in the temple, in the portico of Solomon.

The Lord was present at the festival but not as a participant. How could he be? He is the one

[8]See above, Jn 10:12-13.
[9]Jn 10:12.
[10]Fragment #2 (Reuss, 188).

who said, "I hate, I despise your festivals."[11] But in order to speak his beneficial words in the presence of many people, he showed himself to the Jews and mingled with them without being sought. We must suppose that "Dedication" here refers either to the first festival at which Solomon performed the dedication,[12] or to when Zerubbabel later built the temple along with Jeshua after the return from Babylon.[13] Since it was "winter" and rainy at that time, all the people probably ran to the portico. Therefore, Christ too went there in order to make himself known to everyone who wanted to see him and to grant them his aid. Those who saw him were keen to ask him something because people are especially prone to stir up such discussions when they are at leisure.

10:24 So the Jews gathered around him and said to him, "How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Christ, tell us plainly."

The sting of envy takes away their ability to perceive what might lead to faith, yet the magnitude of what he performed forces them to marvel. **[250]** Nevertheless they find fault with his words and say that the obscurity of his teaching is an impediment to their ability to understand what they are supposed to learn. So they demand that he speak more clearly, despite the fact that they had often heard him and had received extensive explanation on this point. Even though he did not explicitly say, "I am the Christ," he presented them with many statements of the honorable names that belong to him by nature. At one time he said, "I am the light of the world."[14] At another time he said, "I am the resurrection and the life; I am the way; I am the gate; I am the good shepherd."[15] By giving himself these names, he indicates that he is the Christ. After all, it is customary for the Scripture to crown the Christ with such honorable names, even though the Jews demanded that he say it clearly. It would perhaps have been in vain and difficult to accept if he had said in simple words, "I am the Christ," without accompanying actions to serve as proof that would reasonably convince them that he is the Christ. It is incomparably better that they learn that he is the Christ not from what he says but from the attributes that naturally belong to him, by which the divine Scriptures prophesy and declare that he would be revealed. The Jews did not understand this because they were too mean-spirited. So they say, "How long will you keep us in suspense?" Contemptuous people normally talk like this.

10:25 Jesus answered, "I have told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in my Father's name testify to me."

Even Christ, then, considered it superfluous to repeat the same points to those who had often **[251]** heard them and did not believe. Everyone's nature should be judged by the quality of what they do, not by what they say. When he says that he accomplishes works "in the name of the Father," he does not mean he is making use of power from above like some saint. Nor is he accusing himself of being powerless. He is God from God, consubstantial with the Father, and he is the power of the Father. Rather, he is ascribing the power of his works to divine glory when he says that he does works "in the name of the Father." Yet he does render honor to the Father so that he does not give the Jews an opportunity to attack him. And he thought it fitting not to exceed the measure of the form of a slave, even though he is God and Lord. Furthermore,

[11]Amos 5:21.
[12]1 Kings 8.
[13]Ezra 3:2.
[14]Jn 8:12.
[15]Jn 11:25; 14:6; 10:9, 11.

when he says he does works "in the name of the Father," he is teaching that the Jews were blaspheming when they said that he casts out demons by Beelzeboul.[16] Since the Father does miracles not because he is the Father but because he is God by nature, so also the Son can do what the Father does not because he is the Son but because he is God from God. Therefore, he was speaking according to the *oikonomia* when he said that he does works "in the name of the Father."

10:26-28 "But you do not believe, because you do not belong to my sheep. As I told you, my sheep hear my voice. I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish."

A readiness to listen and believe is the mark of Christ's sheep, just as unbelief is a mark of the sheep of strangers. We take the word *hear* to mean "believe what was said." Those who hear him are known by God. And **[252]** "being known" means "being brought into a family relationship,"[17] since no one at all is unknown to God. Therefore, when he says, "I know my own," he means this: "I will mystically and permanently receive them and make them family members."

One might put it like this: Inasmuch as he became a human being, he has made all people family members because he is the same race as they are. So we are all relatives of Christ in a mystical fashion, inasmuch as he became a human being. However, those who do not preserve their conformation into the image of his holiness become strangers. Thus the Jews were family members because of their relationship to the faithful Abraham, but by becoming unfaithful they were deprived of their relationship with him because their behavior was different from his.

Family relationship is the beginning of ready obedience. Faith in God makes us his own, and being his own makes us wise. But these wise people did not accept the knowledge that is profitable for salvation. So he indicated that they were foreigners when he said that even the Gentiles who would believe were his sheep,[18] *and he threatened to withdraw to the Gentiles, so that through this threat he might frighten them into thinking rightly.*[19]

Furthermore, he says, "And my sheep follow me." Those who by a God-given grace believe and follow in the footsteps of Christ no longer serve the shadows of the law, but they serve what Christ commands, following his word. So they will by grace ascend to his honor and be called sons of God. Since Christ ascends to the heavens, they too will follow him. And he says he will grant a recompense and reward to those who follow him: eternal life and freedom from subjection to death and decay and also from the torments imposed by the judge on transgressors. By the fact that he gives life, he shows that he himself is life by nature and that he supplies this life of himself, not by receiving it from someone else. We understand "eternal life" to mean not simply the length of days that all, both good and bad, will enjoy after the resurrection, but also spending them in happiness.

It is also possible to understand "life" to refer to the mystical blessing through which Christ implants his own life into the faithful by their participation in his flesh, according to the statement, "Whoever **[253]** eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life."[20]

10:28-30 "And no one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one can snatch them out of the hand of my Father. I and my Father are one."

The faithful have Christ's help, and the devil

[16]Lk 11:15.
[17]See above, Jn 10:14-15, p. 66.
[18]See Jn 10:16.
[19]Fragment #3 (Reuss, 188-89).
[20]Jn 6:54.

cannot "snatch" them. Those who possess an endless enjoyment of blessings remain in him, and from then on, no one snatches them from the happiness they have been given so as to bring them to punishment and torments. Those who are in Christ's hand, after all, cannot be snatched away to be punished because of Christ's great power. ("Hand" in the divine Scripture means "power.") There is no doubt, then, that the hand of Christ is invincible and powerful enough to do anything. But when he sees the Jews mocking him, thinking that he is a mere human being, not realizing that the man they see and touch is God by nature, he says, "no one will snatch them out of the hand of my Father," that is, out of my hand. This is to persuade them that he is the power of the Father. He is saying that he is the almighty right hand of the Father, since the Father does everything through him, just as what we do is accomplished through our hand. In many places in the Scripture, Christ is called the "hand" or the "right hand" of the Father, which means his power. The almighty power and activity of God is called simply his "hand." (Language about God always surpasses bodily representation.) The Father is said **[254]** to give to the Son, but this does not imply that the Son does not always have creation in his hand; rather, it implies that he is life by nature. He supplies it to us who lack life so that we may be made alive through the Son, who is life by nature and has this attribute of himself. However, inasmuch as he also became a human being, it is also fitting for him to ask for and receive from the Father what he already has as God by nature.

He gives what he has as God by nature; as a human being, he receives it and raises it to his own glory, proceeding to this point on his own.[21]

Christ admitted his human attributes, but he returns to his God-befitting dignity and exults in the excellent qualities of his nature for the benefit of the faithful and for sound faith, which entertains no suspicion that the Son is inferior to the Father. In this way he shows himself to be the unmarred image of the Father, preserving the imprint of the Father in himself completely and in its integrity. Furthermore, when we say that the Son and the Father are "one," we do not confuse the individuals who are numerically distinct, like some who say that the Father and the Son are the same person.[22] Rather, we believe that the Father subsists on his own and the Son on his own, and the two come together into one identity of substance. We also know that they possess one power so that one is seen without variation in the other.

"I and the Father are one." With the word *one*, he is referring to the identity of substance. With the word *are*, he is dividing the object of our thought in two and tying them together again in one divine nature.

However, we must also make the following point against the Arians. When he says, "I and the Father are one," he is not indicating an identity of will but a unity of substance. After all, even the Jews understood that when he said this, he was saying that he was God and equal **[255]** to the Father. And Christ did not deny that he said what they thought he said.

10:31 Then the Jews took up stones again to stone him.

They could not bear it when he said that he was one with the Father, so they rushed to kill him, even though everything he did proclaimed him to be God by nature. Not only on this occasion but at other times as well, when they took up stones to kill him, they stood motionless by the power of Christ. By this it is clear

[21]Fragment #4 (Reuss, 189).

[22]Literally "the same one." Cyril does not actually use the term *person* in this sentence, but I have supplied it to make the sense clear.

that he would not have suffered if he were not willing. Nevertheless, because of his gentleness Christ checked their irrational impulse by refraining from saying, "For which word that I spoke are you angry with me?" and saying instead, "For which work that I did?"[23] If I had not done many God-befitting works that show me to be by nature God, he says, you would have reason to be upset when you hear me now say, "I and the Father are one."[24] But I would not have said this if I had not demonstrated it through everything that I have done. And he says that the works are "from the Father," not from himself, to show modesty for our benefit so that we may not boast when we receive anything from God. However, when he says that he has shown works from the Father, he is not indicating that their power is foreign to him; rather, he is teaching that the works belong to the entire divine nature. We understand there to be one divine nature in the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Whatever the Father does is accomplished through the Son in the Spirit. And what the Son does, in turn, the Father is said to do in the Spirit. That is why he himself said, "I do nothing on my own, but the Father who remains in me—he does the works."[25]

If my works had not testified to the words that I spoke when I said I was equal to the Father, you would not have hesitated to be upset at my claim to be by nature God—if all my works had not shown me to be God by nature. After all, if I had blasphemed when I said I was God, you would probably think it would take greater deeds than what I accomplished for me to be shown to be God, and for that reason you would try to kill me.[26] **[256]**

[23]Here Cyril is commenting on Jn 10:32, "Jesus replied, 'I have shown you many good works from the Father. For which of these are you going to stone me?'"

[24]Jn 6:30.

[25]Jn 8:28; 14:10.

[26]Fragment #5 (Reuss, 189).

10:33 "It is not for a good work that we are stoning you but for blasphemy."

Because they had "a zeal for God, but it was not enlightened,"[27] they were upset when they heard Christ say, "I and the Father are one."[28] (After all, what would prevent him from being one with the Father if they believed that he was God by nature?) That is why they also tried to stone him and why, when they defended themselves by giving the reason for their actions, they said, "We are not stoning you for good that you did but for blasphemy." But on the contrary, they were the ones who were blaspheming because they wanted to stone him who was truly God. They did not realize that Jesus was going to come not in the naked divine nature but enfleshed of the seed of David, so they said that the right confession was blasphemy.

10:34-36 "I said, 'You are gods,'" etc.

Now when the Father calls some people "gods," that honor must surely come to them from outside themselves, since there is only one who is by nature God. So that Jesus may not be thought to be one of those, clothed with a divine glory that does not belong to his essence but is added to him like it is to them, he of necessity makes a clear distinction between himself and them. He demonstrates that he is so far removed from their poverty that they are called gods only because he has come to be in them. He is, after all, the Word of God the Father. Now if the fact that the Word has come to be in them is sufficient to make them shine with divine honor so that human beings are called gods, how could he who supplies that glory to others not be God by nature?

At this point he is convicting the Jews of trying to stone him for no reason at all. Their

[27]Rom 10:2.

[28]Jn 10:30.

act was not a response to his statement "I **[257]** and the Father are one." He is saying, If you think I am blaspheming because I said I was God, why did you not judge it to be blasphemy when the Father said in the law to human beings, "You are gods"? He says this not to get them to say anything against the Father but to prove their ignorance of the law and of the divinely inspired Scriptures. In what he says he teaches that there is a great difference between those who are called gods and him who is God by nature. After all, if the people to whom the Word of God came were called "gods," and they were bright with the honor of the divine nature because they admitted and received the Word of God into their soul, how could he not be God by nature when he is the one on account of whom they are gods? For "the Word was God," as John says,[29] and he is the one who supplies this glory to others. Now if the Word of God through the Holy Spirit leads people up to a grace beyond humanity and bedecks whomever he comes to with divine honor, why, he says, do you claim I am blaspheming when I claim that I am the Son of God and that I am God? You make this claim even though the works that I did from him testify that I am God by nature. He sanctified me and sent me into the world as the "Savior of the world."[30] The ability to save humanity from the devil, from sin and from decay belongs only to him who is God by nature.

Perhaps, however, when the divine Scripture says that the Son was sent by the Father, the heretics will immediately take that statement as support for their own error and may well say, You who refuse to say that the Son is inferior to the Father—how can you not see that he is sent by him as by one who is greater and superior? What then shall we say? We shall say that the term *sent* is especially appropriate for his state of self-emptying. You hear that Paul joins both together, saying **[258]** that the Son was sent by the Father when he was born of a woman under the law as a human being along with us, even though he was the Lord and the lawgiver. Now if the Son is understood to be in the form of a servant and then he is said to be sent from the Father, he sustains no damage at all when it comes to being of the same substance with him, equal in glory and in no way falling short.

When our language is applied to God, you know, it resists careful scrutiny. I maintain that it must not be understood according to our customary usage but in accordance with what is fitting for the divine and supreme nature. So what if human language has no words capable of explaining the divine glory? It is absurd to say that the superiority of the highest glory of all suffers harm because of the weakness of human language and the poverty of our words. Remember Solomon, who says, "The glory of the Lord hides speech."[31] When we meddle in trying to give a precise explanation of the glory of the Lord, we are like those who want to measure heaven with a span.[32] Therefore, when anything is said about God in a human fashion, we must understand it in a way that is fitting for God. Otherwise, what will you do when you hear David sing, "You who sit upon the cherubim, manifest yourself. Take your power and come to save us"?[33] How can an incorporeal being sit? Where is the God of all when David urges him to come to us? God says through the prophet, "'Do I not fill heaven and earth?' says the Lord."[34] How then could he who fills all things come to us? It is also written that certain people built a tower reaching to the heavens, and "the Lord went down to see the city and the tower. And the Lord said, 'Come, let us go down and confuse

[29]Jn 1:1.
[30]1 Jn 4:14.
[31]Prov 25:2.
[32]Is 40:12.
[33]Ps 80:1-2 (Ps 79:2-3 LXX).
[34]Jer 23:24.

their tongues there.'"[35] From where did the Lord go down? **[259]** How did the holy Trinity urge itself to descend? And how, tell me, did the Savior himself promise to send the Paraclete to us from heaven? From where and to where does he send that which fills all things? "For the Spirit of the Lord has filled the world," as it is written.[36]

Therefore, our words signify matters beyond us when they are spoken of God. Do you wish to understand matters so difficult? Do you then perceive that your mind is too weak to comprehend them? Do not be upset, my good fellow, but confess the weakness of your nature and remember him who says, "Do not investigate what is beyond your strength."[37] When you lift up your physical eyes to the orb of the sun, you immediately turn away, overcome by the blast of light. Know, then, that the divine nature also dwells in unapproachable light[38]—unapproachable to the minds of those who meddle. Therefore, when matters concerning God are discussed in human words, we must think of nothing base but remember that the riches of the divine glory are being reflected in the poverty of our words. What if the Son is sent by the Father? Will he for that reason be inferior? When light is sent out from the sun's body, is it of a different nature than the sun or inferior to it? How is it not ignorant even to think this? Therefore, since the Son is the light of the Father, he is sent to us like a ray, let's say, shining from the sun. Indeed, that is what David is asking for when he says, "Send out your light and your truth."[39] And if it is the Father's glory to have light, how can you say that the one in whom he is glorified is inferior to him?

Furthermore, the Son says of himself, "Whom the Father sanctified and sent."[40] Now the Scripture uses the word *sanctify* in many ways. **[260]** Anything dedicated to God is called "sanctified."[41] For example, he said to Moses, "Sanctify to me every firstborn."[42] Also, whatever is prepared by God to carry out his will is "sanctified." This is what he says about Cyrus and the Medes when he willed them to make war on the city of the Babylonians: "The mighty ones are coming to carry out my wrath. They rejoice and are proud. They are sanctified, and I myself lead them."[43] Also, whatever participates in the Holy Spirit is "sanctified." Now the Son says that he was sanctified by the Father in the sense that he was prepared by him to restore the life of the world and to destroy those who oppose him, or further, in the sense that he was sent to be slain for the salvation of the world. Indeed, whatever is set apart as a sacrifice to God is called "holy."[44] We also say that he was sanctified in a human way, like we are, when he became flesh. In other words, his flesh, which was not holy by nature, was sanctified when it received the Word, who was united to it. Because this happens, he is sanctified by the Father, since the divine nature of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit is one.

The Only Begotten sanctifies all other things that ascend to sanctification by participation in being sanctified. Something is said to be "sanctified" by the divine Scripture in many ways. He was sanctified, that is, chosen to be sent into the world to save those in it. Or you may understand something to be sanctified when it is designated as a sacrifice, as in, "One died for all" according to the good pleasure of God the Father.[45] *Or he is*

[35]Gen 11:5, 7.
[36]Wis 1:7.
[37]Sir 3:21.
[38]1 Tim 6:16.
[39]Ps 43:3 (Ps 42:3 LXX).
[40]Jn 10:36.
[41]Cf. Cyril's comments on Jn 6:51 (vol. 1, pp. 231-32) and Jn 7:30 (vol. 1, p. 296).
[42]Ex 13:2.
[43]Is 13:3.
[44]In Greek, the noun *holy* and the verb *sanctify* come from the same root.
[45]2 Cor 5:14.

sanctified because he made his temple holy. After all, his holy flesh was not holy by its own nature, but it was sanctified by receiving sanctification from the Word, who was united to it. This is the sense of the word I think he means.[46]

10:37-38 "If I am not doing the works of my Father, then do not believe me. But if I do them, even though you do not believe me, believe my works, so that you may know and believe that the Father is in me and I am in him."

What he is saying is something like this: It is easy to call God "Father," but it is difficult, even impossible, for a creature to prove it through actions. [**261**] Therefore, by the God-befitting works that I perform, he says, I show myself equal to God the Father. There is no defense for your unbelief since you have learned by experience that I am equal to the Father by the God-befitting works that I do, even though because of the flesh, I appear to be one of you, just one among many. From these works, one can recognize that "I am in the Father and the Father is in me."[47] The identity of substance makes the Father to be in and to be seen in the Son, and the Son in the Father. Indeed, even among us, the essence of our father is recognized in the child born of him, and the essence of the child, in turn, is recognized in the parent. There is one definition for the nature of all of them, and they are all one in nature. But because we are separated by our bodies the many are no longer one. One cannot say that about him who is God by nature, however. The divine is incorporeal, though we understand the holy Trinity to exist in distinct subsistences.[48] The Father is the Father, not the Son; and the Son is the Son, not the Father; and the Spirit is distinctly the Holy Spirit, even though there is no separation between them because of their communion and unity with each other.

The holy Trinity is known in the Father, in the Son and in the Holy Spirit. But the designation of each one of them who is numbered does not signify part of the Trinity but the whole Trinity. God is indivisible and simple, although distributed among them.[49]

Since there is one divine nature in the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, we say that the Father is seen in the Son, and the Son in the Father. And we must also realize that the fact that the Son wills the same things as the Father and has one [**262**] mind with him is not what makes the Son say, "I am in the Father and the Father is in me,"[50] and, "I and the Father are one."[51] Rather, it is because he is a genuine offspring of the substance of the Father that the Father appears in him and he appears in the Father. He says that he wills and speaks and works the same things as the Father and easily brings about what he wishes, which is what the Father does as well, so that by all these acts he may be shown to be consubstantial with him and a true fruit of his substance. He does not just have a temporary union with him consisting merely of similar wills and the bonds of love, which we ascribe also to creatures.

He is speaking against the Arians. This is not like what he said to the disciples. When the Lord said to them, "If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept the Father's commandments and abide in his love,"[52] *he was explaining that whoever carries out his commandments will abide in Christ's love. This does not raise the disciples to consubstantiality with the Son, as if they had some capacity for this, nor does it cause them to perish if they no*

[46]Fragment #6 (Reuss, 189).
[47]Jn 14:10.
[48]ὑπάρξεσι. This word is a synonym of *hypostasis*.
[49]This fragment, included in Pusey's text, is extant only in a Syriac translation.
[50]Jn 14:10.
[51]Jn 10:30.
[52]Jn 15:10.

longer will to carry out his commandments. The Son, as God by nature, unswervingly does what pleases the Father; as a human being, he says these things for our benefit so that we may imitate them as much as possible. We do not understand willing or not willing to belong to essence or nature, but to choice. That pertains to the disciples but not to the Son. From the natural blessings that the Son has, we conclude that he is of the same substance as the Father. But we do not conclude this from those properties that come to be and perish in us.[53]

The Evangelist depicts the hardness of the Jews, who were not softened by such good words but sought to "arrest him" and to kill the one who had the power of the Savior. As God by nature, he escaped those who were raging against him, even though he was right in their hands. The Evangelist reported this incident as one who marveled at it. It shows that since he easily escaped unharmed from the midst of those who wanted to kill him, he could never have been arrested against his will.[54]

10:40-42 He went away again across the Jordan to the place where John had first been baptizing, and he remained there. Many came to him and said, "John performed no sign, but everything that John said about this man was true." And many believed in him there.

The Savior leaves Jerusalem and seeks refuge in a place that has springs in order to intimate through a type how he will leave Judea and go over to the church of the Gentiles, which has the springs of baptism. There many cross the Jordan and come to him (which is indicated by the fact that Christ dwelled "across the Jordan"). Those who cross the Jordan through holy baptism, therefore, are brought to God. **[263]** Indeed, he went from the synagogue of the Jews to the Gentiles, and there "many came to him" and "believed" the words spoken about him by the saints. And they believe in him "there," where the springs of water are, where we are taught the mystery of Christ. After all, Christ was not in the streams on the near side of the Jordan, but somewhere "across" the Jordan. And when he went there, he "remained" there, since he remains securely in the church of the Gentiles.

Furthermore, we honor John not because he performed any God-befitting deed but because he testified truly about Christ. Christ is not only more marvelous than John, but he is more marvelous than every saint. They were prophets, but he is the wonder-working God. We must understand that the words of John and the rest of the prophets are a road that leads us to faith in Christ.

11:1-2 Now a certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and Martha her sister. Mary was the one who anointed the Lord with perfume and wiped his feet with her hair; her brother Lazarus was ill.

The Evangelist intentionally mentions the names of the women to show that they were distinguished in piety. That is why the Lord loved them. Of the many things Mary probably did for the Lord, he mentions the perfume. This is not random. He mentions it to show that Mary had such a thirst for Christ that she "wiped his feet with her hair," seeking to unite to herself more firmly the spiritual blessing[55] that comes from his holy flesh. Indeed, **[264]** she often sat at Christ's feet intently and without distraction and was drawn into kinship with him.

Because of the love of the women, their

[53]Fragment #7 (Reuss, 190).

[54]Fragment #8 (Reuss, 190). This fragment comments on Jn 10:39, which reads, "Then they tried to arrest him again, but he escaped from their hands." This verse receives no comment in the Pusey text.

[55]"Blessing" (εὐλογία) refers not only to a benefit in general but is also the term Cyril regularly uses to refer to the Eucharist.

brother was worthy to be loved by Christ as well, and Christ loved him dearly.[56]

11:3 So his sisters sent a message to him, "Lord, he whom you love is ill."

The women send for the Lord. They always wish to have him near them, but now they have a good reason: the sick man. They believe that if only Christ would appear, the sufferer would be freed from his disease. They subtly remind him of the love that he has for the sick man, inducing him to come there especially for that reason. They know that he cares for him. Now he was able, as God who cares for all things, to heal him, even though absent. However, they thought that if he were present, he would stretch out his hand and wake him. As of yet, not even they had perfect faith. That is why they were troubled, apparently thinking that Lazarus would not have gotten sick at all if Christ had not neglected him. Since those who are loved by God have all good things, they are saying, why is "he whom you love" ill? Or perhaps they are saying this as well: Great is the audacity of the illness, since it dared to afflict those who are loved by God. It may be that they are also intending to say something like this: Since you love and heal even your enemies, you ought all the more to confer this benefit on those who love you. You can do all things, after all, with a mere act of your will. **[265]** Their statement, then, is full of faith and demonstrates their genuine relationship to Christ.

11:4 But when Jesus heard it, he said, "This illness does not lead to death; rather, it is for God's glory, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it."

Now the Lord says this not so that the men would go away and announce it to Lazarus's sisters, but as God he is foretelling what will happen. He saw that the outcome of the matter would be for the glory of God. Not that the illness came "that he may be glorified"; it would be silly to say that. But once it had come, he also saw that it would have a marvelous outcome. And he is saying that he is by nature God since what happened, happened for his glory. After he had said that the illness came about "for God's glory," he added, "so that the Son of God may be glorified in it," speaking of himself.

There is nothing perplexing about the fact that death came to Lazarus even though Jesus said that Lazarus's illness would not lead to death. When we look at the outcome of the matter and we see that he was going to raise him in a little while, we do not focus on what happened in the meantime, but on how things turned out in the end. The Lord was determined to show that death is the one who is infirm and to exhibit the outcome for the glory of God, that is, himself. **[266]**

11:6 Now when he heard that he was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was.

He postponed his arrival so that he would not heal him when he was sick but raise him when he was dead. That takes greater power and so it brings him greater glory.

11:7-8 After this he said to his disciples, "Let us go to Judea again." His disciples said to him, "Rabbi, the Jews were just now trying to stone you, and you are going there again?"

When the Lord said, "Let us go to Judea again," he seems to be hinting at the following: even though they are unworthy of a good deed, nevertheless the opportunity presents itself for us to convey a benefit to them. So let us go back to them. But the disciples want to prevent him because of their love for him, though they

[56]Fragment #9 (Reuss, 190).

are thinking in a human fashion that he did not intend to place himself in danger by contacting the Jews. So they remind him of the rage of the Jews against him, practically saying, Why do you seek to be with the unbelieving and thankless people who are softened neither by your words nor by your works? Even now they are trying to kill you, and they seethe with anger. They are either saying this, or their **[267]** statement indicates that he is leading *them* into evident danger. All the same, they obey their teacher as one who knows best.

11:9-10 Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours of daylight? Those who walk during the day do not stumble, because they see the light of this world. But those who walk at night stumble, because the light is not in them."

Perhaps he is comparing the human mind, which is easily swayed and loves novelty, to the ever-moving advance of the day. The human mind is not fixed on one idea but jumps from one thought to another just as the day advances from one hour to another. That is how you should understand the words, "Are there not twelve hours of daylight?" In other words, I am the day, he says, and the light. Just as the light of day cannot cease until the appointed time has been fulfilled, so also it is not a possibility that the illumination that comes from me be shrouded from the Jews until the proper measure of my kindness has been reached. He is calling the time of his advent "day," while the time before that he calls "night," as when the Lord says, "We must do the works of him who sent us while it is still day."[57] This, then, is what he is saying here: it is not the time for me to separate myself from the Jews, even though **[268]** they are unholy, but it is the time for me to make every effort to heal them. They must not be punished now by the divine grace withdrawing from them like the sun. No, just as daylight does not fade until the twelve hours have been fulfilled, so also the illumination that comes from me is not shrouded prematurely, but I remain with the Jews until my crucifixion, sending into them like light an understanding of the knowledge of God. Since the Jews are in the darkness of unbelief and stumble over me like a stone, I must go back to them and enlighten them so that they may stop their insane opposition to God.

11:11 After saying this, he told them, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I am going there to awaken him."

A worthy cause draws me to Jerusalem. (This is what the words *our friend has fallen asleep* communicate.) And if we disregard him, we will get a reputation for being coldhearted. Therefore, we must avoid the disgrace of doing that and run to the rescue of our friend, despising the plots of the Jews. Showing his God-befitting power, he calls **[269]** the departure of the human soul from the body "sleep." And that is quite correct, since he who created humanity for incorruption, who made the generations of the world to be full of health, as it is written,[58] did not think it right to call it "death." Besides, his statement is true anyway, since before God, the momentary death of our body really is nothing other than sleep, as it is brought to an end just by a mere nod from him who is life by nature, that is, Christ. Notice that he did not say, "Lazarus has died, and I am going to raise him," but he says, "He has fallen asleep." By this he is avoiding boastfulness for our instruction and benefit. Otherwise he would not have uttered a statement so obscure and hidden that even the disciples themselves did not understand it. He did not say, "I am going to give him life" or "to

[57]Jn 9:4.

[58]Wis 1:14.

raise him from the dead," but "to awaken him," which was not sufficient at the time for them to suspect what he really meant.

11:12-13 His disciples said, "Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will recover." Jesus, however, was speaking about his death, but they thought he was talking about taking rest in sleep.

They did not understand the meaning of his statement. They thought that Jesus was speaking about taking rest in sleep, which often happens to sick people, and it refreshes them. That is why they say, It is not worthwhile to go and wake Lazarus from his sleep, since waking a sick man does not help him. They said this with the intention of preventing him from going on the journey, saying that it is not worth it to go into the midst **[270]** of those who want to kill him to do something that has no benefit.

Surely it is irrational to believe that he is going there to wake him. Therefore, they say, "If he has fallen asleep, he will recover." They do not think he is talking about sleep or about death; they think he is telling them some riddle. Since he was going some fifteen stadia,[59] *he would not have arrived in time to wake him up.*[60]

11:14-15 Then Jesus told them plainly, "Lazarus is dead. For your sake, I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him."

Since the disciples did not understand that he was referring to death as sleep, he clarified his meaning and said, "He is dead." And he says that he is "glad," not from a love of glory because he was about to perform a miracle but because this was going to become for the disciples an occasion for faith. The statement "I was not there" means the following: If I had been there, he would not have died, since I would have had mercy on him when he was merely ill. But as it is, in my absence death came to him so that by raising him I may bestow great benefit on you through your faith in me. Christ says these things not as though he could only perform God-befitting deeds when he was present, but because if he were present, he would not have neglected his friend to the point where he sank into death. But he says, "Let us go to him," as if Lazarus were still alive, since the dead are alive to him as God, in that they will live again.

11:16 Then Thomas, who was called the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with him."

Thomas's statement contains zeal, but it also contains cowardice. It comes from a devout disposition, but it is also mixed with littleness of faith. He cannot bear being left behind, **[271]** and he persuades the others to make the same resolution. However, he thinks they were going to suffer at the hands of the Jews, even against the will of Christ, because of the murderous intent of the Jews. He does not consider the power of the Savior, which is what he should have done. Christ made them cowardly by enduring with utmost patience what he suffered at the hands of the Jews. So he says that they must not be separated from their teacher, even if certain danger lies ahead. So Thomas, perhaps with a gentle smile, said, "Let us go," that is, "Let us die." Or he is saying this: If we go, we will surely die. But let us not avoid this suffering, since we should not love our life so much. After all, if he raises the dead, fear is superfluous, since we have one who is able to raise us after we have fallen.

11:17-19 When Jesus arrived at Bethany, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days. Now Bethany was near

[59]About two miles. See Jn 11:18.
[60]Fragment #10 (Reuss, 190-91).

Jerusalem, fifteen stadia away, and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them about their brother.

He adds a mention of the number of days since Lazarus's death for this reason: so that the miracle may be more miraculous, just in case someone might say that he had come after one day, and that Lazarus was not dead, but he raised him from sickness. He also says that "many" Jews were in Bethany, even though it was not a highly populated place, since they came from Jerusalem. The distance of the road was not too great to prevent sincere friends from being with Martha's family. Either that or **[272]** he is giving the reason that the miracle was talked about by everyone in Jerusalem and the surrounding area: since many people were there, the story naturally spread everywhere, some telling what had been done out of admiration, others out of envy, slandering the miracle through false accusation.

11:20 When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, while Mary stayed in the house.

Perhaps Martha was the more eager to do the right thing (that is why she was the first to meet him), but Mary was the more intelligent. Therefore, since she had the more sensitive soul, she remained at home, receiving the comfort of her consoling friends, while Martha behaved as a simpler person, stricken with grief but nevertheless acting more boldly.

11:21-24 Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask of him." Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again." Martha replied to him, "I know that he will rise again on the last day."

Martha is saying something like this: My brother died, she says, not because human nature is subject to death, but because you, who can overcome death by a command, were not here. Because of her grief, she wandered beyond thoughts that were fitting and imagined that the Lord could no longer do anything since the critical moment had passed. **[273]** She thought that he had come not to raise Lazarus but to comfort them. She even gently hints that he is at fault for delaying and not coming immediately when he would have been able to help, after she sent for him with the message, "Lord, he whom you love is ill."[61] The statement *God will give you whatever you ask of him* are the words of one who is almost afraid to ask clearly for what she wants. She errs concerning the truth, however, in that she addresses him not as God but as one of the saints. Because of his appearance in flesh, she thinks that whatever he asks as a saint, he will receive from God, not realizing that since he is God by nature and the power of the Father, he has irresistible might over all things. After all, if she had realized that he was God, she would not have said, "if you had been here," since God is everywhere. Because of his aversion to boasting, the Lord did not say, "I will raise your brother" but "He will rise again." He is in effect gently rebuking her and saying, "He will rise again as you desire, but not the way you think. If you think this will be granted by prayer and supplication, you offer the prayer. Do not ask me to do it. I am a miracle worker who can by my own power raise the dead." When the woman heard this, she was ashamed to say, "Raise him right now," but she sort of goaded him to perform the deed right away. She seems troubled by the postponement of time and says, "I know that he will rise again on the last day," but I long to see the resurrection of my brother before that. Either that or, when the Lord says, "Your brother will rise again," the woman says, "I know," to indicate

[61]Jn 11:3.

her agreement with this teaching. I believe, she is saying, that the dead rise just as you have taught: "the hour is coming when they shall come out—those who have done good to a resurrection of life, those who have done evil **[274]** to a resurrection of judgment."[62] Likewise Isaiah said in the Spirit, "The dead shall rise, and those who are in the tombs shall be raised."[63] I do not disbelieve the message of resurrection, like the Sadducees do.

11:25-27 Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?" She said to him, "Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, the one coming into the world."

Eternal life is in fact the fruit and reward of faith in Christ, and there is no other way for the human soul to obtain it. Even though we are all raised on account of Christ, this is the true life: to live in unending blessedness. To live again only for punishment is no different than death. So when one sees that the saints, who have received the promise of eternal life, die, this is nothing. It is just what happens. The display of grace is reserved for the proper time. Its power is not partial but extends to everyone from beginning to end, even to the saints who have already died and have tasted death for a little while. This grace is reserved for the general resurrection. Then all will enjoy good things together. When the Savior said, "Even though they die, they will live," he did not take away death in the present age. No, he admits that it has power over the faithful only to the extent that it happens to them, since he has reserved the grace of the resurrection for the proper time. He is saying that "those who believe in me" will not be without a share of the death of the flesh because of their human nature, **[275]** but they will suffer nothing terrible from it, since God can easily give life to whomever he wishes. Whoever believes in him has unending life in blessedness and complete incorruptibility in the age to come. Therefore, let no unbeliever mock. Christ did not say, "from this present moment they will not see death," but when he said without qualification that they would "never" see death, he was speaking about the age to come, reserving the fulfillment of the promise until then. And when he says to Martha, "Do you believe?" he is asking for a confession of faith, which is the mother and patron of life. She readily agrees and accurately confesses, not simply believing that he is *a* christ or *a* son of God (since even a prophet can be a christ because he is anointed, and the same prophet can be understood to be a son), but by using the definite article and saying, "*the* Christ, *the* Son of God," she confessed him to be the one, preeminent, true Son. Her faith, then, is in the Son, not in a creature.

When Christ sees that she did not understand the truth about him, he clarifies that matter and says, "I am the life," meaning, "You do not need to look for me somewhere else or to hope that after a long time your brother will have a resurrection. I, who call people to this, am here." The Son is life by nature, who calls all things into being and who raises everyone by his own power, not simply raising them but raising them to life. That is why he joins "life" to the word resurrection. *We must note that the Lord calls himself "life," not just "living one," as some godlessly dare to say about him. There is a difference between "life" and "living one." A "living one" is capable of receiving life, but "life" causes living, just as wisdom causes a wise person. The one receives; the other gives.*[64]

Just as the saints of old did not yet attain the

[62]Jn 5:28-29.
[63]Is 29:19.
[64]Fragment #11 (Reuss, 191).

resurrection and its glories but they waited for us, so also believers must wait for the general resurrection so that we all may rise, including the saints of old. As they waited for us, not receiving the honors that were due them so that all might enjoy them together, so also we will not enjoy the resurrection by ourselves, so that we all may rise and obtain that blessing together, along with the saints of old.[65] **[276]**

"Do you believe this?"

Once he has explained the force of the mystery about himself and shown clearly that he is by nature life and true God, he asks for the assent of faith, thus establishing a type for the churches in this matter. We must confess the solemn mystery not by throwing empty words into the air, but we must root our faith in our heart and mind and make our confession as a fruit of that fact. And we must believe without any doubt or double-mindedness, since the double-minded person is arrogant and hobbled when it comes to faith. That is why such people are "unstable in all their ways."[66] Furthermore, we must understand that we make our confession of faith to God, even though we are interrogated by men (who hold the priestly office, I mean), when we say, "I believe," during the reception of holy baptism. Therefore, it is an utterly terrible thing to lie and to slip into unbelief, lest we have the Lord of all himself as the judge and witness of our foolishness, who says, "'And I am witness,' says the Lord."[67]

We should also note that when Lazarus was lying dead, he asks the woman for the assent of faith on his behalf, as it were, so that this type may have force in the churches as well. What I mean is this: when a newborn infant is brought either to receive the chrism of the catechumenate or the [chrism] at the consummation of holy baptism, the one who brings the child says "amen" on its behalf. And for those who are going to be baptized because they are seized by extreme sickness, certain people make the renunciation [of Satan] and declare attachment [to Christ], lending their own voice, as it were, out of love **[277]** to those assailed by sickness. That is what we see happening in the case of Lazarus and his sister. Martha skillfully and shrewdly sows her confession of faith ahead of time so that she may reap the fruit of it.

11:28-29 When she had said this, she went back and called her sister Mary and told her privately, "The teacher is here and is calling for you." And when she heard it, she got up and went to him.

"She went back" to call "her sister" so that she too might share in the happiness of the anticipated event and receive along with her the one who had died, raised again beyond all hope. That is because she heard, "Your brother will rise again."[68] But she announced the arrival of the Savior to her sister "secretly" because some of the Jews sitting by her were envious of Christ the miracle worker.

Now we will not find in the Gospels that Christ said, "Call your sister for me," but Martha says this because she considers the undeniable urgency of the situation and her sister's right to be present as equivalent to a verbal command. And she ran to him eagerly and wanted to greet him. How could she not do this, when she grieved bitterly at his absence and her mind burned with great reverence and love toward him? **[278]**

11:30-31 Now Jesus had not yet come into the village but was still at the place where Martha had met him. The Jews who were with her in the house, consoling her, saw

[65]Fragment #12 (Reuss, 191).
[66]Jas 1:8.
[67]Jer 36:23 (LXX).
[68]Jn 11:23.

Mary get up quickly and go out. They followed her, saying that she was going to the tomb to weep there.

Now the Jews who are with her think that she ran to the tomb to weep, and so they follow her. They do this by the will of God so that they may all together go to see the miracle, even though that was not their intent. After all, if this had not happened according to God's *oikonomia*, the Evangelist would not have mentioned it, nor would he have recorded the reasons for each action if he did not everywhere seek after the truth. Therefore, he stated the reason many ran to the tomb, were found there, and became spectators of the miracle and announced it to others.

11:32 When Mary came where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet and said, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died."

Mary says that death came to her brother prematurely because of the Lord's absence, and she says that he came to the house when the time for healing had passed. It is possible to conjecture from this that she spoke as one addressing God himself, even though she did not speak accurately because she thought that since he was absent in the body, he was not present. **[279]** She was more accurate and more intelligent than Martha, however, in that she did not say, "God will give you whatever you ask of him."[69] Therefore, the Lord says nothing to her, while he spoke at length to Martha. He does not correct Mary, who of course is intoxicated with grief, for saying, "If you had been here" to the one who fills all creation. He does this as an example for us, so that we do not correct those who are in the throes of mourning. Rather, he condescends to her and reveals his human nature by weeping and being troubled when he sees her weeping and the Jews who had come with her weeping.

11:33-34 When Jesus saw her weeping and the Jews who came with her also weeping, he was troubled by the Spirit and agitated. He said, "Where have you laid him?"

Since Christ is not only God by nature but also human, he undergoes human experience with the rest of us. When grief begins to stir in him and his holy flesh inclines to tears, he does not allow it to indulge those tears without restraint, as we often do. He "was troubled by the Spirit," that is, by the power of the Holy Spirit he rebukes[70] his own flesh, in a manner of speaking. That flesh, **[280]** since it cannot bear the movement of the divine nature within it, trembles and gives the appearance of being troubled. I think that is what "agitated" refers to. Otherwise, how could he experience trouble? How could that nature that is undisturbed and calm be troubled? The flesh, then, is being rebuked by the Spirit and taught to have feelings beyond its own nature. That is, after all, why the almighty Word of God came to be in the flesh, or rather he became flesh, so that by the energies of his Spirit he might strengthen the weaknesses of the flesh, free its nature from feelings that are too earthly, and transform it, as it were, to only such feelings as are pleasing to God. Now it is an infirmity of human nature to be tyrannized by grief. But this infirmity, along with the others, is neutralized first in Christ so that this benefit may extend to us as well.

Or we should understand the words "he was troubled by the Spirit [he rebuked his Spirit] and was agitated"[71] to mean: Moved to pity by

[69]Jn 11:22.

[70]The Greek word for "trouble" (ἐμβριμάομαι) can also mean "rebuke."

[71]Cyril earlier construes the phrase ἐνεβριμήσατο τῷ πνεύματι to mean "he was troubled by the Spirit," but here he construes it to mean "he rebuked [his] Spirit." Both meanings are possible. I have here translated it "he was troubled by the Spirit," to keep

the weeping of many, he commanded (in a sense) his own Spirit to overthrow death ahead of time and raise Lazarus.

It seems appropriate to think of the passage in the Psalms, "Command, O God, your strength; strengthen, O God, that which you have wrought in us,"[72] *understanding "command" in a God-befitting way. Though it is expressed in human words drawn from our experience, it leads us up to a concept that transcends us.*[73]

The Evangelist used the word "trouble [rebuke]"[74] *to refer to his pointed threat against death.*[75]

He did not ask, "Where have you laid him?" because he was ignorant. After all, he knew that Lazarus had died when he was in another part of the country, so how could he be ignorant of the tomb? He speaks this way to avoid boasting. He did not say, "Let us go to the tomb, for I will raise him," even though asking the question this way has this significance. Nevertheless, by saying this he prepared many to go before **[281]** him that they might show him what he was asking about. He said these things, then, in accordance with the *oikonomia* to draw many people to that place through his word. He pretends to be ignorant, even though he is by nature God and knows all things, not only those that have happened but also those that will happen, before they come to be.[76]

So his question conveys no ignorance on the part of him who for our sakes became like us. Rather, by it he is shown to be equal to the Father, since the Father asks, "Adam, where are you?"[77] He too feigns ignorance and asks, "Where have you laid him?" so that by his question a multitude may be gathered together for his demonstration, and the miracle of raising a man who had already undergone corruption may be attested particularly by his enemies.

11:36-37 Then the Jews said, "See how he loved him!" But some of them said, "Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?"

When the Evangelist sees the tearless nature weeping, he is astonished, even though the suffering was proper to the flesh and not the divine nature. The Lord weeps **[282]** when he sees the man who was made in his image succumb to corruption, so that he may put an end to our tears.[78] That is also why he died, to free us from death. But he does no more than weep, and then he immediately checks his tears. This is so he does not appear cruel and inhuman as he teaches us not to give in excessively to grief over the dead. It is one thing to be sympathetic, another to be effeminate and unmanly. Therefore, he allowed his flesh to cry a little, even though he is by nature tearless and immune to all grief, as far as his own nature is concerned. Even his enemies are amazed by the Lord's tears. Those who achieve the pinnacle of philosophy and have a brilliant reputation in it shed tears with the greatest reluctance because they use their manliness to overcome every misfortune. The Jews thought that he wept over the death of Lazarus, but he actually wept out of pity for human nature as a whole. He was not crying for Lazarus alone, but he was thinking of what afflicts everyone, namely that the entire human nature became subject to death when it justly suffered so great a penalty. Others, however, wounded by envy, said nothing good. They did not actually blame the Lord for allowing Lazarus to die,

the translation of the biblical text consistent, but I have added the alternate construal in brackets because that is the meaning Cyril discusses in this paragraph.

[72]Ps 68:28 (Ps 67:29 LXX).

[73]Fragment #13 (Reuss, 191-92).

[74]See note 70.

[75]Fragment #14 (Reuss, 192).

[76]Sus 1:42.

[77]Gen 3:19.

[78]Cf. Cyril, *Apologeticus contra Theodoretum pro xii capitibus*, in *Patrologia Graeca*, ed. J.-P. Migne (Paris: 1857–1886), 76:441B.

since that complaint could only come from those who believed that he was able to stop death. No, they are basically saying this: Where is your power, O miracle worker? Look at that. Your dear friend died even against your will. After all, the fact that you loved him is clear from your tears. If what you did for the blind man was in your power, you would also be able to stop death, **[283]** since that is also an act that is beyond human nature. They say this, then, rejoicing at seeing his power in some sense paralyzed.

11:38-39 Then Jesus, again troubled in himself, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone was lying against it. Jesus said, "Take away the stone."

Here we understand "troubled" as the will struggling with a sort of movement according to its power, because he fiercely rebuked his grief and the tears that would flow from his grief. As God, he rebukes[79] his human nature like a teacher, commanding it to be brave in sorrowful situations. Either that or, with movement appropriate to God, he is decreeing that he must finally overthrow the power of death. This he exhibits in his own flesh, and the movement of his body signifies what is hidden within. This is shown here by the word *troubled*, which means: through the bearing of his body he signified the motion hidden within him.

Now when Christ enters Lazarus's tomb, it is written that "Jesus, troubled in himself, came into the tomb." We understand "trouble" in his case to refer to his willing, accompanied by movement, as it were, under the will's power.[80]

He himself did not roll away the stone for two reasons: first, to teach that it is superfluous to work miracles when there is no necessity; and second, to teach that he himself will raise the dead, but the angels will be there as servants of that event, whom the Lord elsewhere in a parable calls "reapers."[81]

Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, "Lord, already there is a stench because he has been dead four days."
It is normal to disbelieve great deeds, and **[284]** a reluctance to marvel is a natural result of events beyond reason. It seems to me that even the good Martha suffered from this. The surpassing quality of the deed takes away the confidence of her faith. The outlandishness of the hope disorders her appropriate thought process. So it is no surprise that she who confessed the faith is tossed about once again by lack of faith due to the extravagance of the miracle. And she says, "already there is a stench," either solely out of honor for Christ to keep him from the unpleasantness of the odor of the corpse, or she says this out of [general] respect since the relatives of the dead hurry to bury the body in the earth before it becomes foul out of respect for the living, and they consider it a dishonor to the dead man if he becomes an object of loathing to others.

11:40 Jesus said to her, "Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?"

Faith is a great blessing, when it arises from a fervent mind, and it has such power that not only the believer is healed, **[285]** but even others besides the believers are healed, like the paralytic who was lowered [through the roof] in Capernaum and was healed by the faith of those who carried him, or like Lazarus, who was healed by the faith of his sister. To her the Lord said, "If you believe, you will see the glory of God." He is practically saying: Since Lazarus is dead, he cannot believe, so you fill up what is lacking in the faith of the dead man. Now there

[79]See note 70.
[80]Fragment #15 (Reuss, 192).
[81]Mt 13:39.

are two kinds of faith. One kind is dogmatic, consisting of the soul assenting to something, as in the statement, "Whoever believes in the Son is not judged."[82] The other is a gift given by Christ through participation in grace. "To one," he says, "the utterance of wisdom is given through the Spirit, to another faith,"[83] which is not only dogmatic, but energetic, accomplishing feats beyond human ability, such as "moving mountains."[84] Martha, because of the weakness of her thought processes, fell into unbelief, but the Lord did not leave her there. He brought her a swift remedy for her suffering. He says that she must firmly "believe" in order to see blessings beyond hope. Double-mindedness, after all, is a great affliction, and it deprives us of the gifts of God. Therefore, by warning her he corrected the whole human race to prevent it from being caught in the evils of double-mindedness. Furthermore, since Christ was avoiding empty boasting, he did not say, "You will see my glory," but the glory "of God." Raising the dead, however, is the glory of God. Therefore, he who said, "I am the resurrection,"[85] is God by nature, whose glory he says a little later the woman will see—if you think that the truth (who is Christ) cannot lie. So he promised her that her dead brother would rise again. **[286]** Mary, who is more intelligent, expresses no doubt, but Martha succumbed to the disease of double-mindedness.

11:41-42 And Jesus looked upward and said, "Father, I thank you for having heard me. I knew that you always hear me, but I have said this for the sake of the crowd standing here, so that they may believe that you sent me."

Christ is speaking in an earthly fashion as a human being according to the *oikonomia*, not according to the superiority of the divine nature. He offers thanks to the Father not for Lazarus alone but for the life of all. Since he is good, he is of one will with the Father in restoring human nature to life—that nature fell into decay because of transgression—and there is no difference in goodness between him and the Father. And just as we can be persuaded by our own reasoning not to do what we originally intended, so also the Lord, since he is the Word and counsel of the Father, has made the Father kindly disposed toward us. Of course, we do not say that the divine nature is angry. Since God is righteous and good, he knows the right time to rebuke and the right time to relent. When the Lord gives thanks, however, he does this as an example to us, honoring the Father.

Now when an equal gives thanks to an equal, he certainly does not do so as a mark of inferiority of essence. That is why he specifies: I say these things "for the sake of the crowd." He is practically saying: I have simulated the appearance of prayer, and according to the *oikonomia* I said that I give thanks. After all, "I knew that you always hear me." The one divine nature is not disobedient to itself, since the mind of the Trinity (of the Father, Son and Spirit) is one. **[287]** Therefore, since I know, he says, that our counsel is one and our will is one, I said these things for the sake of the crowd. Christ says these things for the sake of the Jews, giving thanks to the Father as if he were performing God-befitting miracles through the Father, so that they may no longer say that he performs signs by Beelzeboul.[86] So to prevent us from stumbling, he explains why he gave the appearance of prayer by saying, I did this "on account of the crowd." Furthermore, he says, "You sent me," because of the suspicion of the Jews. "I have come not on my own like the false prophets, but by your good pleasure and will I emptied myself, taking the

[82]Jn 3:18.
[83]1 Cor 12:8-9.
[84]1 Cor 13:2.
[85]Jn 11:25.
[86]Mt 12:24.

form of a slave,[87] in order to restore life to everyone." The manner of his prayer, then, fit the *oikonomia* and was appropriate to his appearance with the flesh, not to the superiority and incomparable glory of the divine nature. After all, asking and receiving anything at all would be fitting for a slave and normal for one under authority. Yet Christ can do even this without blame. Since he accepted becoming a human being, how could he now refuse what is human?

In the seventh book of the commentary on the Gospel of John, Cyril writes as follows:

The Son is completely perfect in himself. He lacks no single good attribute. He is begotten of the essence of God the Father, and he is full of the substance of his power and God-befitting glory. He has everything under his feet, and there is nothing his power cannot do. He can "do all things," as the saint says.[88] *Although it is true* **[288]** *that he has all things in his possession, he asks the Father, it is said, and receives "the Gentiles and the ends of the earth" as his glorious possession.*[89] *And we must investigate how and when he receives. For it is fitting and necessary also to ask about time and look into the occasion and make a painstaking investigation into the meaning. When, therefore, he became human, when he "emptied himself," as it is written,*[90] *when he descended into the form that is appropriate for those who must ask, then he did and said those things that are fitting for a human being, and we are told that they were accomplished by the Father. After all, where did he manifest the form of humility, and how did that self-emptying show itself clearly except when he willingly endured something contrary to his majesty and humbled himself for us? In the same way he was weary from the effort of the journey, even though he is the Lord of the powers, and he needed food, even though he is the "bread that came down from heaven and gives life to the world,"*[91] *and he suffered death "in the flesh,"*[92] *even though he is the one "in whom we move and have our being";*[93] *so also he is said to ask, even though he is the Lord of all. And we can easily show that the Only Begotten was not first called to his kingdom when he became human. To quarrel very much with this is not far removed from stupidity. Therefore, we maintain that what you mentioned was done for the same reason. Do you think that the Lord prayed for Lazarus and in this way obtained life for him? You will never think this when you are reminded of the remaining words. He did not merely say, "Father, I thank you that you have heard me," but he added, "I said this for the crowd gathered here, that they may believe that you sent me." You see clearly from this the reason for the prayer. Because the Jews were so wicked and audacious that they made an accusation when the Lord performed miracles and claimed that it was by Beelzebub that he accomplished these God-befitting deeds, he rightly refuted this opinion of theirs and showed that he did all these things* **[289]** *as God along with the Father. He did not (like those men who were false prophets) come by his own will. Regarding his decision to say things that are inappropriate for God, he stated, "I said this for the crowd gathered here, that they may believe that you sent me." If it were not right for him to correct the opinion of those present, so that they might understand that the miracle that he received for Lazarus was from above and from the Father, he would never have said, "Father, I thank you that you have heard me." He is the will and Word and counsel of the Father regarding all his excellent attributes. What counsel did he seek, or what will, or what word from his begetter that he might receive some work, when he has the Father in himself by nature and he is in the Father (since he is from*

[87]Phil 2:7.
[88]Job 42:2.
[89]Ps 2:8.
[90]Phil 2:7.
[91]Jn 6:33.
[92]1 Pet 4:1.
[93]Acts 17:28.

his essence)? How did he ask as one far removed from the Father, or how was he unable to drive mournful death out of a corpse? Even at the beginning he formed the man out of insensate matter and presented him animate and rational. We will accept, therefore, the explanation that does not err in the faith—not of those men who speak foolishly, but of the Scripture, which is spoken by the Spirit and contains nothing crooked or perverse.[94]

11:43-44 When he had said this, he cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with strips of cloth, and his face wrapped in a cloth.

Oh, the miracle! He brought the stinking corpse, dead for four days, out of the tomb and commanded him who was bound hand and foot to walk. And immediately, the dead man was off and the corpse began to run, freed from rot and losing its bad smell, escaping through the gates of death without his **[290]** bonds hindering him from running. Although his sight was taken away by the veil that covered his face, he runs without hindrance to the one who called him, recognizing the Lord's voice. His word was fit for God and his command regal, having the power to destroy death and overthrow decay and display power beyond our imagination.

The use of a piercing cry, however, is completely foreign and unusual for Christ the Savior. In fact, God the Father says somewhere about him, "He will not wrangle or cry aloud," etc.,[95] since the works of the true divine nature are without noise or tumult of any kind. This was the case in Christ, since he was by nature God from God, and true God. What then do we say when we see him cry aloud contrary to his custom? Surely no one will sink to such a level of folly as to say that he ever went beyond what is fitting or fell short of what is right. How then is this to be understood? His shouting has a cause and motive that we must explain. It was for the benefit of the hearers. He performs the miracle on Lazarus as a kind of type of the general resurrection of the dead. He sets forth what he did for one person as a beautiful image of what is more general and common to all. We believe that the Lord will come, and we understand that there will be a cry of a trumpet, as Paul says,[96] commanding those lying in the ground to rise again (with the unspeakable power of the almighty God bringing it about, that is).

The command was fit for God and regal. Contrary to his custom, the Savior cries out in order to indicate ahead of time the resurrection of all through the type of Lazarus. He shows how it will happen with the blast of the trumpet and the dead being raised by the power of God.[97] *He does not pray here or use the phrase "the Lord says," so that he will not be understood to have the rank of a servant. No, as God he authoritatively calls the dead man from the tomb. And he "came out" immediately (since no one can resist God when he commands) in order to show that the resurrection of all will take place "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye,"*[98] *just as it happened with Lazarus. And he comes out "bound," completely in keeping with the appearance of the dead, in order to assure the witnesses, so that no one may say that Lazarus was not really dead.*[99]

That is why when the law of Moses **[291]** prescribes the feast of the tabernacles, it says to celebrate it as a "commemoration with trumpets."[100] When human bodies are about

[94]This fragment is preserved only in a Syriac translation given by Severus of Antioch.
[95]Mt 12:19, from Is 42:2.
[96]1 Cor 15:52. Cf. *In Joelem* 3:13-16 (*In xii Prophetas*, Pusey 1:358.15-23).
[97]Cf. Mt 24:31.
[98]1 Cor 15:52.
[99]Fragment #16 (Reuss, 192).
[100]Lev 23:24.

to be pitched like a tent again and the soul of each person has not yet taken up its tabernacle, as it were, the Lord's command will sound forth first and the signal of the resurrection will echo, that is, the trumpet of God, as it is written.[101] Therefore, as a type of this, the Lord spoke to Lazarus with a loud cry that could be heard from a distance, completely disregarding his custom, in order to show us a type of what to expect to happen in the future.

Jesus said to them, "Unbind him, and let him go."

Then he profitably commanded them to untie him with their own hands that they might have no pretext for false witness but **[292]** might be witnesses of the miracle. And this is a picture of the general resurrection, when sin and the decay of death will be destroyed and everyone will be set free. We had fallen into sin like a kind of veil, and we wrapped its shame around the face of our soul and were bound by the ropes of death. So when Christ brings us out of our graves in the earth at the time of the resurrection, then—then he will free us from our original evil and will remove the veil of shame, so to speak. He will finally command that we be set free, no longer under the tyranny of sin or subject to decay or to any of the other afflictions that ordinarily cause us to suffer, so that the statement of one of the holy prophets may be fulfilled in us: "You will go out leaping, like calves set free from their bonds."[102]

Now consider the miracle, I ask you, according to its inner meaning. If our mind should be dead like Lazarus, then our material flesh and nobler soul must approach Christ with a confession, like Martha and Mary, and ask for his help. He will stand by us and command the hardness that lies upon our memory to be removed, and he will cry out with the loud voice of the trumpet of the gospel: "Come out of the distractions of the world!" He will loose the cords of our sin so that we can move vigorously toward virtue. **[293]**

11:45-46 Many of the Jews who had come with Mary and had seen what Jesus did believed in him. But some of them went to the Pharisees and told them what he had done.

Overcome by the miracle, "many" believed. Others, however, wounded by envy, took the miracle as an opportunity to carry out their envious plans. They reported to the rulers what had happened so that when the rulers were distressed by what Christ had done as well, they would have some consolation in their own distress in the fact that others felt the same way too and shared in this foolish vexation. They also did it so that they, who were not strong enough to injure him who did no wrong, might stir up against him the anger of those who were more powerful.

11:47-48 So the chief priests and the Pharisees called a meeting of the council and said, "What are we to do? This man is performing many signs. If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him, and the Romans will come and destroy both our place and our nation."

Of course, the Pharisees too turn away from wonder toward distress, and when they see him stronger than death, they plot to kill him. They do not recognize his ineffable power, since they think of him as a mere man, so they say, "What shall we do? This man is performing many signs." From this fact, they rather should have believed that he was the Christ, of whom the divinely inspired Scriptures prophesied in many places that he would perform many signs. But they actually allege it as a reason by which they try to convince the simpler people to kill him. They say, "If we let

[101] 1 Thess 4:16.
[102] Mal 4:2.

him go on like this," meaning go on living and [**294**] performing miracles, we will suffer terrible things. If many believe in this lawbreaker, we will lose what belongs to us. And finally, when the Jews have grown weak, the Romans will impose their will on us and refuse to allow us to practice the customs of our fathers freely or to rule our people or make judgments, since we will no longer be the judges; they will.

11:49-52 But one of them, Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, said to them, "You know nothing at all! You do not understand that it is better for you to have one man die for the people than to have the whole nation destroyed." He did not say this on his own, but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus was about to die for the nation, and not for the nation only but to gather into one the dispersed children of God.

Now the very thing we were talking about, the very thing the Jews were secretly preparing to do, this their high priest openly advises them to do: to kill Christ, saying that it would be for the nation, even though the nation is unjust. What he says is true, not because it came from their perversity, but because it came from the power and wisdom of God. After all, they killed Christ to their own destruction, but he, "being put to death in the flesh,"[103] became for us the source of all good things. Furthermore, they actually suffered what he calls the destruction of the nation, which they were trying to avoid, that is, subjection to the Romans and the destruction of the shadow of the law. Therefore, Caiaphas said what he said from unlawful intentions, though his words explained something true, [**295**] since he had the office of prophecy. He announced beforehand what blessings the death of Christ would bring without knowing what he was saying. He glorified God under constraint, like Balaam, since he possessed the dignity of the priesthood, as the prophecy was given not to him personally but to the outward representative of the priesthood. Either that or Caiaphas's words were fulfilled and came to pass later without him receiving the grace of prophecy at all. There is a likelihood, after all, that what some people say will come to pass, even if they say it without knowing for sure that it will come about. Now Caiaphas said that Christ's death would be only for the Jews, but the Evangelist says that it is for all humanity, since we are all called relatives and children of God in that he is the Father of all, who has begotten everyone as creator and brought, as it were, what did not exist into being.[104] We are also children of God because we had the honor of being created in his image at the beginning, we had a position of supremacy over everything on earth, we were deemed worthy of the divine confession, and we enjoyed the life and bliss of paradise. But Satan did not consent for us to remain in this condition, so he scattered us and led humanity astray in various ways from its nearness to God. Christ, however, gathered us once again and brought us all by faith into one fold, the church, and united us under one yoke and made everyone one: Jews, Greeks, barbarians, Scythians. He shaped them into "one new humanity"[105] who worships one God. [**296**]

11:53 So from that hour, they planned together to put him to death.

They had the desire to defile themselves with Christ's blood. From the moment when the assembly took place, this desire received its beginning, as it were, as the common consent

[103]1 Pet 3:18.

[104]Rom 4:17.

[105]Eph 2:15.

of all in this matter was publicly acknowledged. After all, the Evangelist did not say, "From that hour, they planned to commit murder," but, "they planned *together*," that is, what seemed good to each individually pleased the whole group collectively.

11:54 Jesus therefore no longer walked about openly among the Jews but went from there to a town called Ephraim in the region near the wilderness; and he remained there with the disciples.

At that point, as God, he certainly knows their secret thoughts, even though no one reported them to him. He withdraws at the condemnation of the Jews, not because he is afraid but so that he does not stir up those who already want to kill him. He is teaching us too to yield before the fever pitch of those who are angry and not to thrust ourselves into danger, not even when it is for the sake of the truth. He is teaching us that when we are overtaken by dangers, we should stand firm, but when they are coming, we should step out of the way because of the uncertainty of the outcome.

11:55 Now the Passover of the Jews was near, and many went up from the country to Jerusalem before the Passover to purify themselves.

The Evangelist passes over everything else and goes to the time of the passion. [**297**] He calls it "the Passover of the Jews" as a type, since the true Passover belongs not to the Jews but to the Christians, who eat the flesh of Christ, the true lamb. According to ancient custom, those who had committed either willful or inadvertent sins purified themselves before the feast, and no one partook of the typical Passover who was a Gentile, uncircumcised, a foreigner, a hired hand or unclean. All of these details are enacted spiritually by Christians.

11:56-57 They were looking for Jesus and were asking one another as they stood in the temple, "What do you think? Surely he will not come to the festival, will he?" Now the chief priests and the Pharisees had given orders that anyone who knew where he was should let them know, so that they might arrest him.

This passage is actually ambiguous. It is not clear whether the words, "You do not think that he will not come to the festival, do you?" were spoken by those who hate him or those who love him. It is likely that those who believed in him said this to the unbelievers, meaning this: Since you plotted to kill Jesus and you think that he is unaware of your secret plans, this will be a clear sign to you that he is God. He will surely not come to celebrate the festival with us now, since, as God, he knows our plans. Or the statement may be construed as coming from those who hate him, meaning this: Since Jesus habitually breaks the law all the time, are you who believe in him willing to acknowledge that this is his character, seeing that he is now not present at the festival, thus breaking the law of the festival by not celebrating it with us? They say this not because everyone had to go to Jerusalem for the Passover, as is the case for the Feast of the Tabernacles, but they take his refusal to go up to Jerusalem as a sign of cowardice, [**298**] as if he were unable to protect himself that day, and for that reason he stayed home. Or those charged with arresting him say this to themselves in despair, since they did not yet see them there, and they were eager to carry out their task quickly.

12:1-2 Six days before the Passover Jesus came to Bethany, the home of Lazarus, who died and whom he had raised from the dead. There they gave a dinner for him. Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those at the table with him.

The Lord ignores the plot of the Jews and gives himself willingly to suffer. When the time for suffering arrives, he comes "to Bethany," not actually to Jerusalem, so that he does not ignite the Jews to anger by a sudden appearance to them but blunts the ferocity of their wrath by the report that he was near. He eats with Lazarus, and by this he reminds the onlookers of his God-befitting authority. The Evangelist demonstrates through his narration that Christ does not despise the law. This may be seen in the fact that "six days before the Passover," when it was necessary to purchase the lamb and keep it until the fourteenth day, he ate with Lazarus and his friends. Perhaps this was because it was the practice of the Jews, not from the law but from custom, to celebrate a little on the day before the sheep was obtained so that after the sheep was obtained, they might devote themselves **[299]** to fasting (or at least to limiting their food) and purification until the time of the festival. Clearly, the Lord honored the customs of the festival even on this point. Next, the Evangelist says in astonishment that he who was dead for four days ate with Christ, as a reminder of his God-befitting authority. He also brings up Martha serving out of love for Christ and waiting on the table. **[301]**

BOOK EIGHT

(Fragments)[1]

12:3-5 Mary took a pound of costly perfume made of pure nard, anointed Jesus' feet and wiped them with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume.

While Martha served, Mary anointed the Lord with perfume, thus putting her love toward him into action. And through the two of them, the perfect measure of love was reached. **[302]**

12:4-8 But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples (the one who was about to betray him), said, "Why was this perfume not sold for three hundred denarii and the money given to the poor?" (He said this not because he cared about the poor but because he was a thief; he kept the common purse and used to steal what was put into it.) Jesus said, "Leave her alone. She has saved it for the day of my burial. You always have the poor with you, but you do not always have me."

The traitor rebukes the woman for showing devotion to Christ and attacks her admirable gesture. He pretends to find fault with her out of love for the poor because she brought perfume and not money. But Judas says this because he does not know what is truly valuable. After all, offering gifts to God ought to be honored more than the poor.

Of course, the Evangelist explains the reason why Judas said this: not because he was concerned for the poor, but he was a thief, and a sacrilegious one at that, stealing the money that was offered to God. And the Lord shows the woman to be free of all blame by the words with which he covertly rebukes the traitor for unreasonably blaming what is worthy of praise: **[303]** "Leave her alone." He defended the anointing with perfume not because of its luxuriousness but because of the mystery regarding his burial, even though she who did it was unaware of the *oikonomia* of the mystery. Indeed, there are those who said and did many things pointing to a mystical type without realizing it. Nevertheless, the Lord rebukes Judas because he said this not from reverence but because he was greedy and was about to betray his teacher for a little profit. That is what "burial" and the mention of his death seem to indicate.

The Savior then adds a reason to persuade us that nothing is better than devotion to him. Love of the poor, he says, is quite praiseworthy; only let it be placed behind respect for God. He is saying something like this: The time appointed for honoring me, he says, that is, my time on earth, demands that the poor not be honored before me. He said this in accordance with the *oikonomia*. He is certainly not forbidding in any way the sympathetic person from loving the poor. So when it is time for worship or singing, these things must be honored before love of the poor. After all, one can do good after the spiritual services are over. Thus he is saying that you do not need to devote yourselves to honoring me at all times without interruption, or to spend everything on priestly service, but you should spend much on the poor. Or he means this: Just as after he ascends to the Father he commands his disciples to fast,[2] so also he says that then they may more freely give attention to caring for the poor and that they will implement that care without disturbance and with more leisure. And that is what happened. After the Savior was taken up, when they no longer followed their teacher but were at leisure, then they

[1]Pusey's text consists of the compilation of extant Greek fragments with a few fragments in Syriac from Severus of Antioch. In addition to these, I have added fragments collected by Reuss from later catenae. The Reuss fragments and the Syriac fragments are set off in italics.

[2]Mt 9:15.

spent all the offerings that were brought to them on the poor. [304]

12:9 When the great crowd of the Jews learned that he was there, they came not only because of Jesus but also to see Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead.

Because of the extraordinary nature of the sign, the crowd was astonished, and they wanted to see with their own eyes what they heard had happened so that they might believe it more confidently. They wanted to see not only Lazarus but also Christ, the performer of the sign. That was not the first time they saw him, since they often saw him and accompanied him. But since he had withdrawn so as not to suffer at the wrong time, they sought to see him again. And the more reasonable among them admired him, since they found nothing in him to condemn. Therefore, the Lord, according to his *oikonomia*,[3] did not enter Jerusalem immediately but remained outside so that through the report about him he might induce the many to want to see him.

12:10-11 So the chief priests planned to put Lazarus to death as well, since it was on account of him that many of the Jews were deserting and believing in Jesus.

See how the leaders seem to be out of their mind, driven here and there by envy, speaking incoherently. They plot murder upon murder, thinking to remove the force of the miraculous deed along with the one who had died in order to stop the people from running to believe in Christ. [305]

12:12-13 The next day the great crowd that had come to the festival heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem. So they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him, shouting, "Hosanna! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord—the King of Israel!"

The crowds, being more obedient and yielding to the force of the sign, greet Christ with palm branches, singing hymns to him as the one who has conquered death. They do not simply praise him, but their fine statement about him is drawn from the divinely inspired Scriptures.[4] They confess that he is the "King of Israel." They say that he is their king, accepting the lordship of Christ. They also say that the Son is "blessed," though not because he obtains blessing from the Father. After all, the Son blesses all things and preserves them from destruction, and he is of the ineffable substance of the Father. Rather, they call him "blessed" because the blessing that is properly due to God and to him who is Lord by nature is offered to him by us, since he came "in the name of the Lord." All the saints came not with the authority of lordship but as genuine servants. He, however, came as Lord. Therefore, the prophetic words are suitably spoken of him, even though some are called lords who have that honor not by nature but by grace. To take another example, people are called "true" when they refrain from falsehood. But one cannot say this in the case of Christ. He is called the truth not because he does not lie but because he has a nature that is completely above lying. [306]

12:14-15 Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it, as it is written: "Do not be afraid, O daughter of Zion. Look, your king is coming, sitting on a donkey's colt!"

A great multitude escorted him like a bodyguard and praised him, but with the utmost

[3]Here *oikonomia* refers to Jesus' plan in this particular circumstance, and perhaps by extension to his overall plan of salvation.

[4]Ps 118:26 (Ps 117:26 LXX).

restraint he sat on a donkey, teaching us not to be lifted up by praises. Nothing we need to know is omitted. Now Matthew speaks more fully about the circumstances surrounding the donkey, but John comes right to the point of the matter, as he is accustomed to do. Since Christ, contrary to his custom, appears seated on a donkey this one time only, we say that he sat on it not because the city was far away (since it was not more than fifteen stadia away) or because there was a crowd (since he did not do this at other times when he was with a crowd); rather, he does this to show that he is about to make a new people subject to him, the unclean among the Gentiles, and to lead them up to the dignity of righteousness and to the Jerusalem above, of which the earthly one is a type. The people, made clean, will enter into it with Christ, who will by hymned by guileless angels, of whom the children are a type. He calls the donkey a "colt" because the people of the Gentiles had been untrained in the faith that leads to reverence.

12:16 His disciples did not understand these things at first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things had been written of him and had been done to him.

In the beginning they did not understand what was written about him. After the resurrection, however, they did not continue to suffer from the Jewish blindness, but the knowledge of the divine words was revealed to them by the Spirit. Christ "was glorified" [**307**] when he came to life again after being crucified. The Evangelist does not blush to mention the ignorance of the disciples along with their knowledge, since his aim is not to be concerned about human shame but to promote the glory of the Spirit and to show how the disciples were before the resurrection and how they were after the resurrection. Now if they were ignorant, the other Jews were all the more ignorant. After the crucifixion, the veil was torn[5] so that we may know that nothing is hidden any longer from those who are faithful and love God. Now they were enlightened with this knowledge from the time of the resurrection when Christ breathed into their face,[6] and they became different from other people. They were enlightened even more on the day of Pentecost, when they were transformed by the power of the Holy Spirit, who came upon them.[7]

12:17-18 So the crowd that had been with him when he called Lazarus out of the tomb and raised him from the dead continued to testify. It was also because they heard that he had performed this sign that the crowd went to meet him.

The gathering of the common people heard what had happened, and they were readily persuaded by those who testified that Christ had raised Lazarus and destroyed the power of death, as the prophets said. That is why they "went to meet him." [**308**]

12:19 The Pharisees then said to one another, "Do you see that you are accomplishing nothing? Look, the whole world has gone after him!"

They say this blaming themselves that they did not long ago do away with Jesus and Lazarus, urging themselves to commit murder. They are upset about the faithful crowd, as if they were being deprived of their own possessions—which really belonged to God.

12:20 Now among those who went up to worship at the festival were some Greeks.

One might be perplexed at this and wonder

[5]Mt 27:51.
[6]Jn 20:22.
[7]Acts 2:1-4.

why "some Greeks" went up to Jerusalem "to worship," and this when the festival was being celebrated according to the law. Certainly no one would say they went up only to see what was happening there. They went up with the Jews to participate with them in the festival that was appropriate for the Jews and the Jews alone. What do the Greeks and the Jews have in common when it comes to their way of worship? We will find that the habit and inclination of each differed greatly indeed. The one honored the truth, the other what is false. What, then, can we say about them? Since the land of the Jews lay next to that of the Galileans, and both they and the Greeks had cities and villages in the vicinity of each other, there were various circumstances that occasioned them to mix together a great deal as they visited each other. And since idol worshipers are very eager to change their views to something better, in that false worship is very easily **[309]** refuted as completely worthless, some of them were readily persuaded to change. They did not yet change completely to the worship of the one true God, however, but were divided between the arguments for abandoning idolatry and following the views of their teachers, I mean Plato and those in his school said to be wise. They say that there is one creator of all and everything else is included in the universe. Certain managers, so to speak, are elected by him to manage human affairs.

Now it was the custom of some Palestinians, especially the Greeks, whose land neighbored that of the Jews, to be impressed at their ways and to honor the name of the one God. This was the view of those we just mentioned, even though they do not express it the way we do. Since they were not entirely inclined toward the Jews, and neither did they reject the customs dear to the Greeks but practiced a middle position and looked to both, they were called "God-fearers." People of this kind, then, realized that their own views were not very different from the customs of the Jews, as far as the manner of sacrifice and the acceptance of monotheism are concerned (since the Jews did not previously know the teaching of the holy and consubstantial Trinity, or the meaning of spiritual worship, for that matter). So they went up to worship, especially at national gatherings, not to slight their own religion but to honor the one God over all. **[310]**

12:21-22 They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and said to him, "Sir, we wish to see Jesus." Philip went and told Andrew; then Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus.

Without realizing it, the Pharisees spoke the truth when they said, "Look, the whole world has gone after him!" Not only the Jews but even the Gentiles were about to believe. Therefore, the addition of the Greeks happened at that time as a sort of first fruits. And since the Greeks were Galilean, "they came to Philip," since he too was Galilean. They did this so that he might show them Jesus, whom they wanted to see since they had heard so many good reports about him. They wanted to worship him and obtain the object of their desires. But Philip remembered that the Lord had said to them, "Go nowhere among the Gentiles, and enter no town of the Samaritans."[8] He was afraid lest he somehow seem to give offense by bringing unbelievers to Christ, not realizing that it was according to the *oikonomia* that the Lord prevented the disciples from going to the Gentiles until the Jews first rejected the grace that was given to them. So he tells Andrew, who is more ardent about and accustomed to such matters. Then, with his approval, they both report it to the Lord. Philip acted wisely, teaching us that it is not good to say just anything to those above us, even if it seems to be good, but rather we

[8]Mt 10:5.

should confer with wise friends about what needs to be done.

12:23 Jesus answered them, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified."

Now the Gentiles are eagerly rushing **[311]** to see him or turn to him. That is why he says, "The hour has come." The time of his suffering was near, after which the calling of the Gentiles immediately followed. He calls the present moment an "hour" in this passage, showing that no other force leads him to the necessity of suffering except this time defined by him.[9] After he has made every effort to lead people to faith and has preached the message of the kingdom of heaven, he wants to progress to the very crowning achievement of hope: to kill death. The only way for that to happen was for life to endure death for all, in order that we all may live in him. That is why he uses the term *glory* to refer to his death and to his suffering of all kinds of terrible things on behalf of sinners who dishonor him. Even though he was always glorified by the angels in heaven, the cross was the beginning of his glorification on earth by the Gentiles as God. After he abandoned the Jews who despised him, he went to the Gentiles and was glorified by them as God, in the expectation that he would come "in the glory of the Father."[10] He does not say that the bare Word will be glorified, but he uses the title *Son of Man*, thus showing that he is one Son, understood to exist ineffably from both humanity and divinity. There is one Son and Christ with no division after the incarnation. He is and is understood to be God even with the flesh.

[There is one Son and Christ with no division after the incarnation] except as far as this: we may speak and think of the nature of the Word and of the flesh on their own. They are not the same in our conception of them. The one is from the essence of God the Father, while the other has its earthly origin from the holy virgin. Nevertheless, there is one Christ from the two. He is not divided into a duality of sons after the concurrence of these two natures that have been mentioned, but he possesses and is understood to possess the power of the divine nature even when he is in the flesh.[11] **[312]**

12:24 "Truly, truly I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit."

Not only does he predict his suffering and that the time is at hand, but he also explains the reason why he regards the suffering as precious: the profit of the suffering is great. Otherwise he would not have chosen to suffer, for he suffered not unwillingly. In fact, because of his mercy toward us, he showed such great kindness that he chose to suffer all kinds of cruelties for our sake. Just as "a grain of wheat sown in the earth" sends up many ears without itself being damaged by them—but rather is present by its power in all the grains since they all sprouted from it—so also the Lord died and, having opened up the recesses of the earth, brought human souls with him, since he was in them all by faith above and beyond his own distinct personal existence. And it is not to the dead alone that he has given this benefit of the fruit that he bears but to the living as well, if the doctrine is made to conform faithfully to the form of the parable. After all, the life of all, both the dead and the living, is the fruit of the suffering of Christ. The death of Christ has become the seed of life.

But what about the divine nature of the

[9]Cyril is here opposing a pagan view of fate. See his discussion of the "hour" in his comments on Jn 7:30 (vol. 1, pp. 295-300).
[10]Mt 16:27.

[11]This fragment exists only in a Syriac translation given by Severus of Antioch. It picks up after the words, "There is one Son and Christ with no division after the incarnation."

Word? Is it susceptible to death? How could it not be completely impious to say this? After all, the Word of God the Father is life by nature. He raises; he does not fall. He destroys death; he is not overcome by **[313]** decay. He gives life to what lacks life; he himself does not seek life from another. Just as light could never become darkness, so also it is impossible for life to cease being life. How then is the same person said to fall to the ground like a "grain of wheat" and to go up as "God with a shout"?[12] It is clear that tasting death would be fitting for him insofar as he became a human being, while divinely going up belongs to him by nature.

12:25 "Those who love their soul will lose it, and those who hate their soul in this world will keep it for eternal life."

Not only should you not be offended at my suffering or disbelieve what I said, but you should prepare for it too. Those who want to take care of their own soul now and do not want to put it in danger for my sake will lose it in the future. But those who endanger it in the present age are storing up much fruit for it. Those who despise their life in this world will obtain incorruption in the world to come. The Lord said these words, not implying that the soul can suffer anything here, but he uses the term *love of the soul* to refer to the desire to hold on to it, as shown by those who do not expose their bodies to danger.

12:26 "Whoever serves me must follow me."

What he is saying is this: If I, he says, for your benefit give myself into death, how is it not cowardly for you, for your own benefit, not to despise your own transient life and, by the death of the flesh, **[314]** obtain imperishable life? (Those who give their soul into death to store up eternal blessings appear to hate their own soul, as far as the suffering is concerned.) And those who live in asceticism hate their own souls in that they are not overcome by the pleasure of the love of the flesh. Therefore, what Christ did when he suffered for the salvation of all, he did as an example of courage, teaching those who desire the blessings we hope for to be eager to practice virtue. Those who want to "follow me," he says, must display the same courage and boldness as I do. That is how they will receive the prize of victory.

"And where I am, there will my servant be also."

And since the author of salvation traveled not by the path of glory and luxury but by the path of disgrace and suffering, we must do so as well, without complaint, that we may reach the same place and share in divine glory. Of what honor are we worthy if we think it beneath us to endure the same suffering as the Lord? Or perhaps when he says, "Where I am, there let my servant be also," he is not talking about a place but a way of virtue. Those who follow Christ ought to have the same qualities that made Christ stand out—not the God-befitting properties that are above humanity (since no human can imitate him who is by nature true God), but those that human nature is capable of displaying, not by bridling **[315]** the sea and doing things like that but by being humble and meek and putting up with insults.

"Whoever serves me, the Father will honor."

Their reward, he says, is this: that they are honored by the Father. Christ's disciples participate in Christ's kingdom and glory to the degree appropriate for human beings. He says that the honors are given by the Father, even though he himself is the giver of all good gifts. In saying this, he is ascribing to the divine nature the act of giving to everyone according to their works, and he is showing that the Father wants us to obey the Son's

[12]Ps 47:5 (Ps 46:6 LXX).

commands, since he will make no law that is contrary to the Father.

We must, therefore, note that whoever does what is pleasing to God serves Christ, but whoever follows their own will follows themselves rather than God.

12:27-28 "Now my soul is troubled. And what should I say—'Father, save me from this hour'? No, it is for this reason that I have come to this hour. Father, glorify your Son."

"Now," he says, "my soul is troubled. And what should I say—'Father, save me from this hour'? No, it is for this reason that I have come to this hour." See again in this passage how easily the human nature is troubled and how easily it is brought over to fear, while the divine and ineffable power, on the other hand, is in all this **[316]** inflexible, intent and focused only on the courage that is fitting for it. The thought of death that is introduced into consideration attempts to trouble Jesus, but the power of his divine nature immediately subdues the passion that is excited and instantaneously transforms the nature overcome by fear into incomparable boldness. We should understand that Christ the Savior experienced human emotions because of his two necessary modes. He had to—had to—show himself through these to be a man born of a woman, not in appearance and fantasy but naturally and truly, experiencing the full human condition except for sin. Fear and cowardice are natural passions among us, but they escape being classified as sins. Furthermore, human emotions were profitably stirred up in Christ, not that the emotions should prevail and go forward, as they do in our case, but that once stirred up, they should be cut short by the power of the Word. Our nature is thus transformed, first in Christ, into a better and more divine condition. It was in this way and no other that the process of healing passed also to us. In Christ, as the first fruits, human nature was returned to newness of life. **[317]** In him we have also gained what is above our nature. That is why he is called the "second Adam" by the divine Scriptures.[13] Just as he hungered and thirsted as a human being, so also he accepts the mental anguish that comes from suffering, since that is a human characteristic. However, he is not troubled like we are, but only to the point of undergoing the sensation of the experience. Then he immediately returns to the courage that is fitting for him.

From these things it is clear that he had a rational soul. Just as being hungry, for example, or undergoing some other such experience is a passion that belongs to the flesh, so also being troubled at the thought of terrible experiences would be a passion of the rational soul, through which alone a thought can enter us through our thought processes. Christ is not yet on the cross, but he experiences mental anguish ahead of time as he looks ahead to what is going to happen and endures by his rational faculty the thought of future events. We should say that the passion of fear belongs neither to the impassible divinity nor to flesh. That passion belongs to the thought processes of the soul, not to the flesh. Even though an irrational animal, which has a soul, is distressed and troubled, it does not arrive at its fear by anticipating future suffering through its thoughts and reasoning.[14] When it is seized by the evils themselves, then it basically takes in the perception of the present danger. But in this case, the Lord is troubled not by what he sees but by what he thinks and what he anticipates. Moreover, Christ did not say, "my flesh is troubled," but "my soul," thus dispelling the supposition of the heretics. And if you object that in ancient times God said to the Jews, "Your fasts and holidays and **[318]**

[13] 1 Cor 15:45.

[14] For Cyril, animals and humans both have souls since they are both alive. Animal souls, however, are nonrational, while human souls are rational.

festivals my soul hates,"[15] and other words such as these, we will reply that he is using our habit of speech because he is condescending to us, just as, with imprecise language, he ascribes to himself a face and eyes and other body parts, even though he is incorporeal. But after the incarnation, if we were to explain the statement in the same way, he would then be an image or phantom or shadow and not truly a human being, as the godless Manes says. The Word of God, then, united to himself the entire nature of a human being in order to save the whole person. For what is not assumed is not healed.[16]

After speaking of being troubled, he does not keep silent but transforms the passion into courage, practically saying: Death is nothing. But I have allowed my flesh to fear that I might transform it to be courageous. I came to restore life to those on earth. Therefore, I am prepared to suffer.

He makes a request of the Father and exhibits the outward form of prayer, not as one who is weak (he is almighty), but as a human being he ascribes qualities that are more than human to the divine nature. He is not outside that nature, since he calls God his own Father, but he knows that in every act, that power and glory will come through the Father and the Son. Whether the text has, "Glorify your Son" or "Glorify your name," the precise meaning is the same. Christ, however, discounts death and the shame of suffering, looking only at the restoration that comes from his suffering. He sees the death of all on the verge of passing away because of the death of his own flesh. **[319]** He sees the power of decay about to be completely taken away and human nature already being transformed to newness of life. So he practically says the following to God the Father: The body, O Father, shrinks from suffering and dreads death, which is unnatural to it. No, it seems unbearable that one who is seated with you and who has power over all should be raged against by the audacity of the Jews. But since I came for this reason, "Glorify your Son," that is, do not prevent him from going to his death, but grant this favor to your Son for the benefit of all. You may learn that the Evangelist elsewhere refers to the cross as "glory" when he says, "For as yet there was no Spirit, because Jesus was not yet glorified."[17] In this passage he clearly refers to the crucifixion as glorification. The cross is glory. Indeed, at the time of his suffering, he patiently and willingly endured many insults that he did not have to suffer. He subjected himself to suffering willingly for us, and undergoing this for the benefit of others is a mark of extreme compassion and the highest glory.

The Son became glorious in another way as well. By the fact that he conquered death, we recognize him to be life and the Son of the living God. The Father is glorified when he shows that he has a Son begotten from him who is like he is. **[320]** He is good, light, life, superior to death, and he does whatever he wants. When he says, "Glorify your Son," he is saying: Consent with me as I will to suffer. After all, the Father did not give the Son over to death without thinking about it, but intentionally for the life of the world. The Father's consent, then, is spoken of as a bestowal of blessings upon us, since he uses the term *glory* to mean *suffering*. He says this also as an example to us that we should pray not to fall into temptation, but once we have fallen into trials, we should bear them nobly and not avoid them but pray to be saved by God. Yes, "Glorify your name." If through danger to ourselves it turns out that God is glorified, let everything else be considered secondary to that.

Just as death was destroyed in no other way than the Savior dying, so it is with each of the

[15]Is 1:13-14.

[16]Cf. Gregory of Nazianzus, *Epistle 101* in *Christology of the Later Fathers*, ed. Edward R. Hardy, (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1954), 218.

[17]Jn 7:39.

passions of the flesh. If he had not been afraid, our nature would not have been freed from fear. If he had not grieved, there could never have been any deliverance from grief. If he had not been troubled and alarmed, there would have been no escape from these conditions. For every human experience, you will find the same corresponding experience in Christ. The passions of his flesh are stirred up, however, not to overcome him as they do us, but so that once they are stirred up they may be destroyed by the power of the Word who dwells in the flesh, transforming our nature to a better condition.

Again, after other matters, when he is lucidly refuting the godlessness of Arius and Eunomius, [Cyril] teaches the following:

Therefore, since the outcome of thought could not truly happen to inanimate flesh, but rather is proper to the rational human soul, how could it be improper for us to hold that we think rightly in ascribing the suffering to the soul rather than to the divine nature, which we would have to do by powerful and ineluctable reasoning if, as they claim, the Word who dwells in the body truly takes the place of the soul?[18] **[321]**

Then a voice came from heaven, "I have glorified him, and I will glorify him again." The Evangelist did not say that the Father spoke from above but that there was a "voice from heaven," lest certain heretics, because they hear the Father speaking, try to claim that the divine nature, the Father, is wrapped in a coarse body. Therefore, he mentions the harmonious voice, but how that voice was brought about we cannot say. The meaning of the words is this: the Son was admired for his many signs, as the Father performed the miracles along with him. And since the Father was a coworker with him in everything he did, he now says that he has glorified him and earnestly promises that he will glorify him again through the sign at his death. Insofar as the Son is God from God and life born of that which is by nature life, he raised himself from the dead. But insofar as he is understood to be a human being like us, though without sin, he is not understood to raise himself, but he rises through the power of the Father.

[18]This fragment exists only in a Syriac translation given by Severus of Antioch.

12:30 Jesus answered, "This voice has come for your sake, not for mine."

The Father uttered a response—only he knows how—to his own **[322]** Son, revealing his will to stir up the zeal of the hearers that they might believe without a doubt that he is by nature the Son of God the Father. The crowd, however, was at a loss, divided into various opinions without understanding. They should have realized that the Father was the one who replied. He was the one whom the Son addressed. After all, he did not ask for thunder to come or an angel to speak. Nevertheless, he said, "This voice has come for your sake, not for mine." He would know the will of his Father, even if nothing had been said, since he was and is the Wisdom and Word of the Father. "For your sake," he says, "the voice has come," so that you might receive me as the Son of God, whom the Father knows to be his own Son by nature. Now the Lord says that "the voice has come," but he does not add that it belongs to the Father or explain how it came about. That is irrelevant. Rather, he is bearing witness that though they heard the voice from heaven, they persisted nonetheless in their impiety.

12:31 "Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be driven out."

The thrice-longed-for advent of the Savior showed that the judgment and verdict on the Gentiles was already at hand. They were about to be delivered from the devil's violence as the holy and righteous judge granted them a

completely just mercy. Now I do not think we should hold that the world was condemned when the time of its justification was at hand. Rather, there will be "judgment" for the world, that is, it will be avenged. "The **[323]** ruler of this world will be driven out." There will be judgment, he says, against the one who has wronged the world, not against the world, which endured the wrong. As Christ himself says, "God did not send the Son to judge the world, but to save the world."[19] This, he says, will be the scope of the impending judgment: the ruler of this world will be driven out. Driven out of what? Clearly, from the rule he obtained by violence and from the kingdom that does not belong to him at all. And the word *out* indicates punishment and going to Hades.

Once people have become incorruptible and sinless, they seek what pleases God. How should people understand this statement, and so become foreigners to the passions of the mind by adhering only to what is good?[20] *Since the whole world was captured and submitted to a yoke of slavery, worshiping the creature, and since it was tyrannically ruled by Satan through the violence of the passions, God introduced the law through holy men and illumined us with a glimmer of the knowledge of God. Since the many were disobedient and did not believe, because of the error that gripped them, we needed not only counsel from holy men but also the favor and grace from above that easily transform us for the better. They were guides for the Gentiles and idolaters, who were harmed by the devil and who wandered off the straight road as if they were forced off. He was at that time powerful and invincible against those who opposed God's judgment that they should be free. As the just one, he was able to have mercy even on them, since they were weak and crushed under unbearable violence, and he was able to take vengeance on him who attacked those who were weaker. Therefore, Christ, the righteousness of God the Father, appeared and led us to the light of the knowledge of God, having justified us by faith. The time of Christ's advent made it so that the judgment and verdict regarding the Gentiles was now at hand. They were about to be freed from the violence of the devil as Christ, the just judge, had mercy on them in his justice. This is what his statement means: The world is not condemned now, since the time of justification is at hand. If we understand it that way, we will not make it conflict with that statement that says, "God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world but to save the world."*[21] *He does not, as some claim, here refer to the Jews who crucified the Lord as "the world," from whom a penalty is demanded for their audacity against Christ, since the death of Christ justifies all of humanity. Therefore, we should understand it instead as follows. Appropriately, there will be a judgment in that sense against the one who harmed the world, not against the one who suffered the harm against the world. He who came to save us fittingly executes this judgment by taking vengeance on the one who inflicted the harm, but showing mercy to the one who suffered the harm. The present judgment is defined as the driving out of the ruler of this world. He calls him the "ruler" even though that is not strictly speaking what he is. God alone is the king of all, but because they are under the influence of stupidity, people selected the devil as their ruler. So he holds that title as a result of that selection. In the same way, sin is also said to rule over the ungodly,*[22] *even though it has no existence of its own, because sinners decide to subject themselves to it by what they do. Now he is either "driven out" from his rule when his might is shattered, or the term "out" refers to punishment and going to Hades. After all, the devil was justly driven out to Hades since he not only made war against human beings but also against the God of all, Jesus. Therefore,*

[19]Jn 3:17.

[20]Reuss notes that the first two sentences of this fragment are unclear (Reuss, 193).

[21]Jn 3:17.

[22]Cf. Rom 5:21.

even though he did not experience fetters and punishment in ancient times, now a penalty is demanded from him for his audacious deeds, as one who rose to the pinnacle of all blasphemy.[23]

12:32 "And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself."

Since Christ has indeed offered himself as a spotless victim to the Father for our salvation, basically paying the penalty on our behalf, we were ransomed from the accusations of sin. And when the beast has gone from our midst and the tyrant has been removed, then Christ leads to himself the race that had strayed, calling not only Jews but all people to salvation through faith in him. The calling of the law was partial, but the calling of Christ is universal. Only Christ, as God, was able to bestow on us all good gifts. He speaks exceedingly well when he says "lifted up" instead of "crucified." He was keeping the mystery hidden from those who wanted to kill him, since they were not worthy to learn it. Yet he allowed those who were wiser to understand that he would suffer for all and on behalf of all. **[324]** I suppose one could explain it in another very fitting way: the death on the cross is an exaltation understood as honor and glory. Christ is then glorified by the fact that he supplies many good gifts to humanity through his death. Through these he draws people to himself. He does not, like the disciples, lead them to someone else. Thus he shows that he is by nature God by not placing the Father outside himself. It is through the Son that one is drawn to the knowledge of the Father.

12:33 He said this to indicate the kind of death he was to die.

With these words, the Evangelist showed that the Lord did not suffer ignorantly but intentionally, and with the knowledge not only that he was dying but with what kind of death he would die. He used the term *death* to refer to the cross.

12:34 The crowd answered him, "We have heard from the law that the Christ remains forever. How can you say that the Son of Man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of Man?"

They say these things, as we mentioned, with the understanding that "lifted up" meant "crucified." It was their custom to employ euphemisms to refer to matters directly related to severe misfortune. Now they try to prove through the Scriptures that Christ is lying. For the Scripture, says one of them, denies that Christ is temporary when it says of him, "You are a priest forever."[24] **[325]** How then can you say, "I am the Christ," when you say that you are going to die? The Jews, without understanding, are claiming that he is not the Christ because of his suffering. They deny that it was written that the Christ must suffer and rise again and return to the Father, that he will be a "minister of the sanctuary"[25] and the high priest of our souls when he returns to life in power and incorruptibility. However, the Scriptures foretell not only that he will come in this common human form but also that he will die for the life of all and rise again after breaking the bonds of death. With this, the statement that "Christ remains forever" is surely fulfilled in a beautiful way. After he was shown to be more powerful than death and decay, he returned to the Father.

12:35 Jesus said to them, "The light is with you for a little longer. Walk while you have the light, so that the darkness may not overtake you. If you walk in the darkness, you do not know where you are going."

[23]Fragment #17 (Reuss, 192-94).

[24]Ps 110:4 (Ps 109:4 LXX).
[25]Heb 8:2.

Christ does not explain clearly the deep mystery of his words to the unintelligent and faithless Jews. Instead he jumps to another topic. He explains what is profitable to them, and at the same time he shows them the reason why they do not understand what is in the Scriptures. He also shows them that if they do not believe that he is the light, the darkness of ignorance will completely overtake them, and they will be deprived of the blessings of the light. Insofar as their expectations were drawn from the Scripture, they looked for the Messiah as light. But when he came, their hopes resulted in the opposite. Darkness overtook them because of their unbelief. So sober up quickly, he says, while it is still possible for you to share in some small part of the radiance of divine light, [**326**] so that the darkness of sin does not overtake you. And he did well to mention darkness after light, since darkness comes on the heels of the departing light. By saying *"the* light," with the article, he signified himself, since he alone is the true light.

12:36 "While you have the light, believe in the light, so that you may become children of light."

He has shown faith in him to be the way of salvation. Through him one also knows the Father. He calls them "children of light," either of himself or of the Father. He calls the Father "light" after saying that he himself is the light in order to show that there is one divine nature belonging to him and to the Father. We become children of the Father when by faith in Christ we receive the Father, who is light. Then we too will be called children of God.

After Jesus had said this, he departed and hid from them.

After teaching them valuable lessons in a few words, he then removes himself from them by his God-befitting power. He hides himself and does not allow them to be roused to anger but gives them the opportunity to change their mind so that they may behave in a better way. And he withdraws for a reason, since it was right before his passion. In this way, he showed that he did not will to be put to death by the Jews, even though he gave himself willingly into suffering, giving himself as a ransom for our life. And he accepted death, which is reasonably compared with sorrow, and he changed the sorrow into joy. [**327**]

12:37 Although he had performed so many signs in their presence, they did not believe in him.

Wanting to rebuke their infinite stubbornness, the Evangelist added the words *in their presence* to show that they did not even believe what they saw.

He says "many" as an accusation against the Jews. The many signs he did still did not put them to shame. They somehow remained intractable in their hardness of heart, even though he omitted nothing intended for their correction. If the Jews had been put to shame—no, wait; the Holy Spirit cannot lie,[26] *who spoke about their unbelief through the prophet Isaiah. They did not believe the prophets, nor did the Jews recognize Christ, who is the power and the "arm"*[27] *of the Father. He hyperbolically used the words "no one" because few of the many people were saved. Wanting to rebuke their infinite stubbornness, the Evangelist added the words "in their presence" to show that they did not even believe what they saw.*[28]

The Son is the "arm"[29] *of God the Father.*[30]

12:38-40 This was to fulfill the word spoken by the prophet Isaiah: "Lord, who

[26]Cyril's Greek echoes the verbiage of Acts 5:3.
[27]Is 53:1.
[28]Fragment #18 (Reuss, 194).
[29]Is 53:1.
[30]Fragment #19 (Reuss, 194).

has believed our message, and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?" And so they could not believe, because Isaiah said long ago, "He has blinded their eyes and hardened their heart, so that they might not look with their eyes, and understand with their heart and turn—and I would heal them."

Now it was not to fulfill prophecy that the Jews wanted to kill the Lord, or else they would not have been impious. Rather it was by their own evil intentions. Though the prophets foretold what would surely happen because of the evil plans they willingly devised, they foretold it for this reason: that the sober might leap over the pitfalls of the devil. It was completely possible for the hearers to have taken heed. Therefore, the prediction was necessary.

The solution to another question.

It was not God who blinded the Jews, or else he would not have called them to account, since he pardons involuntary offenses. But the meaning is this (since Isaiah presents these words as spoken by God): If I become a human being and explain valuable lessons to you with my own voice, you will not listen to me, just as you did not listen to the prophets. And when you see signs that defy explanation, you will gain no profit from seeing them. **[328]** This is what "you will not see" means. After all, he did not say, "I will harden their heart and blind their eyes," but, "Though you hear, you will not hear, and though you see, you will not see, lest you be converted and I will heal you."[31] If they had heard and seen as they were supposed to, they would surely have obtained benefit from it. And so the passage contains no indication of inevitable punishment, nor does it contain a decree of one who condemns and sentences the Jews, but it is a beneficial prediction. He knew what sort of people they would become, and he made a prediction about them. This statement, however, applies not to all [the Jews] but only to the unbelievers. Many of them believed, after all. This is how the seventy have rendered the passage.[32] It is likely, however, that the Evangelist followed the rendering of the Hebrews, which is different than the seventy, when he said, "And so they could not believe," since "he has blinded" them. As far as the plain meaning of the text is concerned, it does not say that God blinded them. It is probably someone else who did this so that the Jews might not turn and obtain healing. But if we do accept that God blinded them, then we must understand it this way: he permitted them to experience blindness at the hands of the devil since they were not good in their disposition, just as he hands over to a reprobate mind and to suffering those who have similar behavior. Since they were this way, it was not right for them to know the depth of the mystery and its secrets, because they did not even keep the commands of the law. Therefore, since they accepted neither the law nor the ordinances of the gospel but closed the eye of their understanding, they do not receive the instruction that is able to enlighten them.

From the words that indicate that the Son has the glory that Isaiah saw,[33] *it is clear that there is no difference between the Father and the Son. After all, there is nothing greater that a human being can see, and the Scripture says that nothing else is greater than this. The Seraphim that Isaiah saw under the throne of God are higher and more honored than all the angels. The mention of the "throne" indicates the nature of the Lord, or the fact that those who are in the form of servile creation are seated in a royal position.*[34] **[329]**

[31]The text Cyril cites here seems to be a condensation of Is 6:9-10, part of which is quoted in the text of John under discussion.

[32]Cyril is referring to the Septuagint, which according to legend was translated by seventy (or seventy-two) Jewish elders.

[33]Is 6:1.

[34]Fragment #20 (Reuss, 194). In this fragment, Cyril comments

12:42-43 Nevertheless many, even of the authorities, believed in him. But because of the Pharisees they did not confess it, for fear that they would be put out of the synagogue; for they loved human glory more than the glory that comes from God.

Now, however, they are compelled by the signs to believe, and they no longer dare to contradict the Lord. Yet they fall away from eternal life by persisting in their own indecency. They prefer the respect of people to a relationship with God. They are slaves of fleeting glory who consider losing the respect of the Pharisees to be an unbearable catastrophe. Since, then, this was what prevented them from believing at that time, hear what Christ says:

12:44-45 Then Jesus cried aloud: "Whoever believes in me believes not in me but in him who sent me. And whoever sees me sees him who sent me."

What he is saying is something like the following: Whoever is able to recognize who it is who dwells here by means of the flesh, and whoever lays hold of truly beautiful spiritual contemplation—this person will truly find me. In their faith in me, they will find their faith in the Father as well. So it is as if he were saying: Whoever believes in me does not believe in a human being but in the power of God in which the Father is known and believed.[35]

He cries aloud, contrary to his custom, and his cry rebukes the inappropriate desire for respect on the part of those who believe in him but remain hidden. He does not wish to be honored secretly by those who choose to admire him, but openly. He assumed that faith must be stored up in the heart, but the wise confession of that faith must be made with great boldness. Since, though he is God by nature, he condescended to put on our form, he avoids for the moment saying openly to those who hate him that they should believe in him, though he had often said this. With the greatest adaptation to those who suffer from untamable envy of him, he gradually accustomed **[330]** their mind to reach toward the depth of the mysteries concerning him, leading them not to a human person but to that of the divine essence, as the divine nature is comprehended completely in the person of God the Father, since he has the Son and the Spirit in himself. With the greatest wisdom he carries them upward, saying, "Whoever believes in me believes not in me but in him who sent me." He does not exclude himself from being the object of our faith, since he is by nature God and arose from God the Father. But skillfully, as has been said, he molds the mind of the weak toward piety, so that you should understand him to be saying something like this: When you believe in me—I who am a human being like you for your sake, but also God on my own and because of the Father from whom I am—do not imagine that you are placing your faith in a human being. I am no less than God by nature, even if I look like you. And I have within myself the one who begat me. Since I am of the same substance as my begetter, your faith will certainly transfer also to the Father himself. As we said, therefore, the Lord gradually taught them something better and, profitably interweaving the human with the divine, said, "Whoever believes in me," etc. Now he has very clearly informed us that faith should be directed not simply to a human being, but to the nature of God, even though the Word was in the flesh, because his nature was not changed into flesh. And he has explained clearly that he is identical to God the Father in every respect because of his natural likeness and the identity, so to speak, of his substance by saying: **[331]**

on Jn 12:41, which reads, "Isaiah said this because he saw his glory and spoke about him." The Pusey text contains no comments on this verse.

[35]Fragment #21 (Reuss, 195).

12:46 "I have come as light into the world, so that everyone who believes in me should not remain in the darkness."

See, he fixes their faith on him and accomplishes two beneficial purposes at the same time. By confessing himself to be "light," he shows that he is God by nature, since such a title is appropriate only for one who is God by nature. By adding the reason for his coming, he embarrasses whoever thinks little of loving him. And we must certainly understand that those who do not yet believe in him are in darkness, since being in the light that comes from him applies only to those who believe in him. Furthermore, he reminds them of what was said about him in many places, where it was foretold that he would come to enlighten the world. For example, "Be enlightened! Be enlightened, O Jerusalem! For your true light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you."[36] And, "Send out your light and your truth."[37] It is as if he said, "I am the light in the Scripture that was expected to come for the salvation of the world to enlighten those who wander in darkness like the night."

12:48 "The word that I have spoken will serve as judge on the last day."

He is saying that those who refuse to hear him and do not receive saving faith will be self-condemned. **[332]** He who came to enlighten came not to judge but to save. So those who disobey and subject themselves to the greatest evils—let them blame themselves as ones who are justly punished. I am not the cause of this; I wanted to save those who were about to fall under judgment. That is why I came. He who established the law punishing unbelievers did not establish it to exact vengeance upon transgressors but so that those who hear and keep it might be saved. I, then, have come to save, and I exhort you to believe and not to despise my words, since now is the time for salvation, not for judgment. On the day of judgment, the word that called you to salvation will bring the penalties of disobedience upon you. What kind of word did I speak?

From the eighth book of Saint Cyril's commentary on the Gospel of John—what he says concerning the heretics, who use obscure language when they want to conceal their godlessness.

Their conscience justly holds them back when they have an inner impulse to "raise their horn on high," as it is written,[38] *and speak evil against him who is truly God by nature, that is, the Only Begotten, who exhibits the nature of the Father and who is his essential and natural image and likeness.*

From the eighth discourse of Saint Cyril's commentary on the Gospel of John.

Believers have glory and kinship with God through Christ. **[333]** *And the divine Paul is on our side when he writes the following: "God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself."*[39] *Let none of those who are accustomed to foolish interpretation of the divinely inspired Scripture confuse what is read when it states that "God was in Christ" or imagine that it is saying that he is clothed with the Spirit. That expression is not at all correct, since Christ is God by nature and not a man clothed with God like one of the prophets.*

Similarly, in the eighth book of the commentary on the Gospel of John.

Justifying faith, then, is a type of change. That which the Son brings to himself he truly brings to the Father also. For there is one divine nature in them both and an undivided essential glory.

For this reason as well, the wise Cyril, in the eighth book of the commentary on the Gospel of John, wrote as follows:

[36]Is 60:1.
[37]Ps 43:3 (Ps 42:3 LXX).
[38]Ps 75:5 (Ps 74:6 LXX).
[39]2 Cor 5:19.

Is the Christian mystery, then, which is so great and worthy of worship, an image and a shadow (or rather an illusion and a phantasm), or is it actually true? And did Manes never make a mistake, that wretched and godless lover of impiety, but we are the ones who erred in opposing these people? That is not so. It [**334**] *could not be. Let that be "cast away on some far-off mountain or to the waves," as some say.*[40] *Not in vain do we believe that he is human, that is, like us in everything except for sin.*[41] [**335**]

[40] *Iliad* 6.347.

[41] These fragments exist only in Syriac translation.

Chapters in Book Nine

1. Because of the identity of nature, the Son is in the Father and the Father, in turn, is in the Son. [337]

CYRIL
ARCHBISHOP OF ALEXANDRIA
COMMENTARY
ON THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN

BOOK NINE

12:49-50 "For I have not spoken on my own, but the Father who sent me has himself given me a commandment about what to say and what to speak. And I know that his commandment is eternal life. What I speak, therefore, I speak just as the Father has told me."

He reminds the Jewish people of what was foretold by Moses about him and thereby skillfully strikes them with a subtle blow. Bringing their inner unholiness to light, he openly convicts them of thinking nothing about raging against the law itself, even though they believed that it was given by God. What God said through Moses about Christ is well known to everyone. I will repeat it, however, to make sure everyone understands: "I will raise up for them a prophet like you from the midst of his brothers,"[1] that is, a lawgiver and a mediator between God and humanity. "And I will put my words in [338] his mouth, and he will speak to them just as I command him. And I will take vengeance on whoever does not listen to whatever the prophet will say in my name."[2] At one and the same time, therefore, our Lord Jesus Christ calls the boastful Jewish people to account for fighting against God the Father himself; and, by saying that he received a command from him and that he does not speak on his own, he clearly demonstrates that he is the prophet announced ahead of time by the law and proclaimed by the voice of God the Father a long time ago. In a way, he reminds them, even though they are sluggish, of the fact that if they do not want to believe his words, they will surely subject themselves to inevitable punishment and endure what God has said. After all, those who neglect the divine command of God the Father and reject the life-giving word of God from our Savior Jesus Christ—how could they avoid falling into extreme calamity, or how could they not remain without a share of his life? With good reason they will hear what was said by the voice of the prophet: "Earth, earth, hear, O hear the word of the Lord. Behold, I am bringing disaster on this people, the fruit of their turning away, because they did not keep my law, and you rejected my word."[3] We will find that the Jews are liable to a double accusation. Although they considered the law to be holy and precious, they did not honor it because they did not believe the one who was proclaimed by it. Also, they did not heed the words of Christ our Savior, even though he openly announced that he was obviously the prophet spoken of in the oracles of the law by saying that he was supplied with words from God the Father.

[1]Deut 18:18.
[2]Deut 18:18-19.
[3]Jer 6:19.

Let no one suppose that the Lord's statement that **[339]** he speaks from God the Father and says nothing on his own can damage him in any way, regarding either his substance or his God-befitting glory. First, however, let us consider and answer this question: Can anyone really suppose that the title and office of prophet is fitting for one who is and is understood to be by nature God? I think that anyone, no matter how simple, would say no, maintaining that it is incredible that God, who speaks in prophecy, should be called a prophet. It was he who "multiplied visions," as it is written, "and was represented by means of the prophets."[4] But since he has taken on the title of a slave and the form of our likeness, and in accordance with that likeness he was called a prophet, the law necessarily clothes him with attributes fitting for a prophet, that is, inquiry of the Father and reception of a "command" about "what to say and what to speak." In addition to that, I think I should also mention this. The Jews had a strong prejudice concerning the law, believing it to be spoken by God. They could not have accepted the words of the Savior when he transformed the ancient precepts into spiritual worship.

And what was their pretext for not wanting to accept the transformation of the types into the truth? They did not know that he was by nature God, and it never entered their mind that the Only Begotten, who was the Word of the Father, bore our flesh for our sakes. Otherwise they would have immediately fallen down before God, completely changed their opinion without hesitation, and preserved the glory that is fitting for him. Instead, those sorry people thought that he was one like us, and that as a mere human being he thought so highly of himself that he tried to abolish the laws that come from God the Father. For example, they said to him plainly, "It is not for a good work that we are stoning you, but for blasphemy, because you, though a human being, are making yourself God."[5] **[340]** Our Lord Jesus Christ, with an elaborate and precise plan to turn his hearers from the suspicion in their mind, changes the subject from a mere human person alone to him who everyone agrees is indisputably worshiped, I mean God the Father. He intended by any means necessary to shame the uninstructed heart of the Jews and to pursue various methods of leading the ignorant to the desire to learn true and more fitting teachings. These sorts of arguments and considerations should suffice for anyone to refute the carping criticisms of the unholy heretics, who think that the Son will be inferior to his begetter in some way because of his statement that he says nothing on his own but has received a command, and that he speaks what he has heard.

I think that this should suffice, but I will say something else to expose the arrogance of their unguarded speech. Come, if you will, now that we have, for the moment, summed up briefly the account of the *oikonomia* with the flesh, let us demonstrate that this statement rightly and properly belongs to the Only Begotten: "I have not spoken on my own, but the Father who sent me has himself given me a commandment about what to say and what to speak." He himself is the living and hypostatic Word of God the Father. Consequently, he explains what is in the Father. And in bringing to light the will of his begetter, he says that he has in effect received a command. One can see that even in our own case this is true and could not be otherwise. A spoken statement, composed of words and phrases, which makes itself heard externally through articulate speech, is commanded, as it were, by our mind and reveals what is in it, even though the event does not take a long time. As soon as the mind has formed a thought, it passes it over to the

[4]Hos 12:10.

[5]Jn 10:33.

voice. And the voice brings what is in the depths to the outside and explains what is in the mind, altering **[341]** nothing it was commanded.[6] What then is strange, sirs, one might well say to them, if the Son, being the Word of God the Father (not exactly like our words, since matters concerning God surpass every example) explains the will of his parent? Does not the prophet give him the most fitting name when he calls him "the messenger of the great will"?[7] Yes, I think this is clear. The Only Begotten sustains no damage to his substance or his honor, even though he is said to receive a "command" from God the Father. Even we ourselves often command others and tell them to do something, but they will not for this reason deny their likeness of nature to us, nor will they lose their essential likeness to us by being less than consubstantial, either before or after the command.

You will reply that they remain consubstantial with us, but they are inferior in dignity because they carry out our command.

On this point, I say this to you about the Only Begotten: If it were not written of him that "though he was in the form of God, he did not consider equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave; and being found in human form, he humbled himself,"[8] your objection might have some credibility. But since the manner of his submission and humility is clear, why do you recklessly criticize him who endured this suffering for our sakes? Therefore, conforming our argument to orthodox doctrine from every direction, we say that our Lord Jesus Christ spoke the words in the passage before us in accordance with the *oikonomia*. **[342]**

13:1 Now before the festival of the Passover, Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart from this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.

The meaning of this passage is rather obscure to many people and not very easy to explain. It contains, as one might guess, no simple sense. Why does the divine Evangelist now inform us about this and note it as something important, saying, "Before the festival of the Passover, Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart from this world and go to the Father"? And what does this mean: "Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end"? Though there is no end to the obscurity of this passage, I think the Evangelist intends to say something like this: Before his saving passion, he is saying, although the Savior was aware that the time for his transition to heaven was knocking at the door, he rendered perfect[9] his love for his own who were in the world. And if this passage requires further explanation, I will repeat what I just said above. All things that came into being through him belong to Christ our Savior—all rational and intellectual creatures, the powers above, thrones, dominions and whatever else is like them, insofar as they are created. Also belonging to him are the rational creatures on earth, since he is Lord of all, even though some do not worship him as creator. So "he loved his own who were in the world." "He did not come to help angels," as Paul says,[10] nor was it for the sake of angelic nature that he, "being in the form of God the Father, did not consider equality with God something to be exploited,"[11] but for us who were in the world,

[6]Cyril is employing the Stoic distinction between a word in the mind (λόγος ἐνδιάθητος) and a spoken word (λόγος προφορικός).
[7]Is 9:6 (Is 9:5 LXX).
[8]Phil 2:6-8.
[9]In Cyril's Greek, the word for "perfect" (τελειοτάτην) has the same root as the word for "end" (τέλος) in the text of John on which he is commenting.
[10]Heb 2:16.
[11]Phil 2:6.

he "emptied [**343**] himself,"[12] and the Lord of all took on the form of a servant, called to this act by his love for us. Then, "having loved those in this world, he loved them to the end," even though before the festival and before the Passover, he "knew that his hour had come to depart from this world and go to the Father." It would have been the mark of one who loved them—but not to the end—to become a human being but then to be unwilling to put himself in danger for the life of all. He, however, "loved them to the end," not refusing to suffer even this, though he knew ahead of time that he would suffer. The Savior's suffering was not unforeseen by him. Now it was possible, says the Evangelist, for him to escape the raging of the Jews and the unholiness of his crucifiers. But he made perfect his love for "his own who were in the world" in that he did not shrink back in any way from being offered up for the life of all. To show that the perfect measure of love is to be seen in this act in particular, I will bring in our Lord Jesus Christ himself as a witness, when he says to the holy disciples, "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends."[13] There is also another reason why the holy Evangelists are always eager to show that our Lord Jesus Christ foreknew the time of his passion: so that none of the inveterate heterodox may disparage his divine glory, saying that he was overcome by weakness and that he endured such a terrible death because he fell unwillingly into the snares of the Jews. Therefore, the language of the saints is in accordance with the *oikonomia* and profitable to us. [**344**]

13:2-5 The devil had already put it into the heart of Judas son of Simon Iscariot to betray him. And during supper Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going to God, got up from the table, took off his outer robe, and tied a towel around himself. Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was tied around him.

The Savior pulls pride out of our mind by the roots as the most shameful affliction, worthy of universal and utter abomination. He knows that nothing harms the human soul as much as this foul and detestable passion. The Lord of all himself justly opposes it, standing as an open enemy of it. "For the Lord resists the proud," as Solomon says.[14] The holy disciples, therefore, especially needed an even and submissive temperament that does not highly esteem empty honor. And since they had no small opportunity to contract this disease, they would easily have slipped into it if they did not receive a lot of help. After all, the fierce beast of arrogance always likes to attack those who have prestige. And what is more glorious than the holy apostles? What is more worthy of attention than their friendship with God? This passion would not afflict one who is of little account in this life. It always avoids the person who possesses nothing enviable and remains inaccessible to those who have no rank. How could such people ever be arrogant about anything? No, pride is dear to people who have an enviable position and for this reason think of themselves more highly than their neighbors. [**345**] They foolishly suppose that they are much better than others since they have achieved some outstanding and supernatural virtue and have pursued a way of life that is unknown and untrodden by others. Since the disease of pride is regularly associated with those who have glory, it was surely necessary for Christ to be an example of even

[12]Phil 2:7.
[13]Jn 15:12-13.
[14]Prov 3:34 (LXX).

temperament to the holy apostles so that by having the Lord of all as a type and image, they too might reshape their mind in a way that is pleasing to God. It was not therefore possible to drive out this disease in any other way than to teach them clearly that they should think of themselves as so inferior to others in glory that they must have the rank of slave and not shrink from performing duties that belong to servants. He taught them this by washing his brothers' feet and wrapping a towel around himself for that act. Consider what a menial act it is, I mean as far as the world's way of thinking and outward behavior is concerned. Christ, then, is an example of an even and unassuming temperament for everyone in this life, not just for the apostles. That is why the divine Paul too, taking him as an image, urges us to do this by saying, "Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus,"[15] and again, "In humility regard others as better than yourselves."[16] In a humble temperament, there is a law of love and concord.

In order to highly exalt the significance of his action and to prevent us from thinking that Christ just happened to do it, the divine Evangelist, as the situation demands, expresses astonishment at his glory and authority and power over all things by saying, "Knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands." He says that he was not unaware that he had authority over all things and that "he had come from God" (that is, he was begotten from the substance of God the Father), and "he was going to God" (that is, he would return to heaven [**346**] and sit by the side of his Father). Yet he underwent such humility that he tied a towel around himself and washed the disciples' feet. Therefore, since we have here the best example of piety and the most illustrious image of love for each other, let us be modest and beloved, and let us consider that however good we may be, our brothers have obtained more excellent qualities than we have. This is how he who is our great example urges us to think and to be willing to think.

13:6-8 He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?" Jesus answered, "You do not know now what I am doing, but later you will understand." Peter said to him, "You will never wash my feet."

One can see throughout all the Scriptures, so to speak, that Peter's emotion is always intense and fired up for devotion. So here too he follows his usual behavior and pushes aside the lesson of extreme humility and love preserved in this passage. He considers who he is by nature on the one hand, and on the other, who it is bringing the basin to him and not refusing to perform the task of a servant. The act was difficult for faith to accept, even though it happened to be seen by many eyes, and it troubled him greatly. Who would not shudder to learn how the one who is Lord of all with the Father exhibited such compassionate service to his disciples that he was especially eager to perform what seems to be the lowest kind of service as an example and type of a modest temperament? Therefore, the divinely inspired disciple is distressed [**347**] and dismayed at the act. His refusal is the fruit of his customary devotion. He does not yet understand the reason for the act, but he thinks that the Lord is doing it for no special reason, just for the refreshment of their bodies. After all, that is the only reason for washing feet, and it is somewhat relaxing after walking. Therefore, he insistently objects, saying, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?" We who are servants by nature must do this—*we* must, he says—not you who are Lord of all. Christ, however, passes over the explanation of the act for the moment. He says that Peter will understand "later" that there is a more weighty

[15]Phil 2:5.
[16]Phil 2:3.

reason for what he did. By "later," he of course means when he gives a fuller explanation of it.

This point, along with the others, will benefit us in no small way. Notice how when the moment calls for action, he defers discourse, but when the moment calls for discourse, he draws back from action. He assigned everything to its fitting and proper time. When Peter shakes his head[17] and explicitly denies that Jesus will ever wash his feet, the Savior lays out clearly the damage he would incur from that, saying:

Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no share with me."

As far as the obvious and superficial point of the passage is concerned, he is saying: If you were not to accept this strange and unaccustomed lesson in humility, you would find no part or lot with me. However, our Lord Jesus Christ often takes small matters as the occasion for his discourses and then makes a general application. He draws a wide range of lessons from the circumstances of a single act or from words spoken with regard to a specific topic. **[348]** From these he introduces an abundance of profitable illustrations. Therefore, we will suppose that in this case too he is saying that unless one should wash away through his grace the defilement of sin and transgression, that person will be without a share of his life and will remain without a taste of the kingdom of heaven. It is unlawful for the impure to enter into the mansions above but only for those who have a pure conscience through love for Christ and who are sanctified by the Spirit through holy baptism.

13:9 Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!"

He who just now exhibited such strong opposition and expressly refused to allow the washing of his feet now offers not only these but his hands and head as well. If, he is saying, I am going to fall away from fellowship with you and lie far removed from the blessings for which I hope because I refuse you when you desire and choose to do this and I wash my own feet, then I will offer you the rest of my body as well to avoid such a terrifying loss. His initial refusal, then, was a fruit of his devotion. It was the mark of one who fears the distressing nature of the act, certainly not of one who opposes his master's commands. He was considering, as I said, the worthiness of the Savior and the insignificance of his own nature when he refused at first. But once he learns of the harm, he immediately runs to what his master wills.

Look at this again and take what he does as a profitable example. Even though he had said, "You will never wash my feet,"[18] he immediately changes his attitude about this, giving no special thought to the fact that he would need to stand by what he said in order to seem right to us. Rather, he considers that he will undergo a greater and more grievous **[349]** loss by holding to what he said. One should therefore guard against rash and hasty words. And one should not with fierce intensity rush into something that is regrettable because of its recklessness.[19] Rather, if someone happens to make a statement, and then consistency would result in the destruction of something good and necessary, that person should learn from this passage that it is far better not simply to assert and maintain in vain what they said before but to be eager to do what is profitable. I think everyone will say that it is better to endure an indictment of our words than to suffer a loss of indispensable blessings. And let swearing be completely absent from

[17]The gesture Cyril is referring to consisted of throwing one's head back. This was a sign of denial.

[18]Jn 13:8.

[19]There are some words missing from this sentence in the Greek text.

our tongues because words are spoken at the spur of the moment without reflection, and changes of plan inevitably happen. One should say that having a discreet tongue that rarely slips into unbecoming language is worthy and truly enviable. And since the divine Scripture itself has shown us that this is a struggle ("for no one can tame the tongue," as it is written),[20] let us keep the expression of our words free from oaths. Then, if circumstances force us to omit something, the blame will be less and the error will incur a more modest indictment. I think we will also obtain a ready pardon from God because of the carelessness of speech that always besets us. "For who can understand their errors?" as it is written.[21] Otherwise, how could the human race not perish from the face of the earth, since language easily falls into mistakes of all kind? It is very difficult to restrain our tongue. **[350]**

13:10-11 Jesus said to him, "One who has bathed does not need to wash, except for the feet, but is entirely clean. And you are clean, though not all of you." For he knew who was to betray him; for this reason he said, "Not all of you are clean."

He takes an example from a common activity in our lives and skillfully crafts a rebuke for the traitor, teaching that man to change his plans and change to a better disposition. Even though he does not yet openly charge him with the evil plot in his mind, his statement nevertheless has a pointed meaning. By testifying to the complete purity of the others, he casts suspicion on the one who is not pure and shows him to be polluted. He commends the purity of the other disciples, the praiseworthiness of their unceasing attachment to him, their labor in following him, their firmness in faith and the fullness of their love toward Christ. For Judas, however, the charge of insatiable greed and the weakness of his commitment to our Lord Jesus Christ grind an indelible stain into him and result in the defilement of his utterly evil plot. So when Christ says, "Now you are clean, though not all of you," his statement is obscure, but it conveys a profitable rebuke to the traitor. Though he did not speak clearly, as we just said, the conscience was sitting in judgment in each person, pricking the sinner and applying the force of the words to the guilty party as necessary.

Notice how Christ's behavior exhibits a certain *oikonomia* and God-befitting endurance. If he had said plainly who **[351]** would betray him, he would have made the others hostile to the traitor. Perhaps Judas would have met with a fatal accident and would have paid a premature penalty at the hands of one who was stirred up by zealous devotion and tried to put the Lord's traitor to death in advance. Therefore, by merely hinting and leaving the sharp accusation to the conscience, he showed the incontestable greatness of his forbearance. He knew that the disciple was neither good nor well disposed toward him but was pregnant with the devil's bitterness and was looking for a way to betray him. Nevertheless, he gave him the same honor as he gave the others. He washed his feet too, exhibiting the same acts of love to all, not letting loose his anger until he had finished employing verbal rebuke. You may observe that this excellent quality too is characteristic of the divine nature. Just because God knows what is going to happen, he does not for that reason impose punishment on people ahead of time. Rather, he puts up with them until the right time, when he sees that they refuse to profit from his forbearance, instead remaining in their chosen evil. Then he punishes them, showing that the act of punishment is a result of their evil will, not really a work of his own will or choice. That is why Ezekiel says, "As I live, says the Lord, I do not desire the death of those who

[20]Jas 3:8.
[21]Ps 19:12 (Ps 18:13 LXX).

die, but that they may turn from their evil ways and live."[22] With great patience and forbearance, then, our Lord Jesus Christ still treats the traitor the same as his other disciples, even though "the devil had already put it into his heart to betray him."[23] (The Evangelist was constrained to point this out, among other things, at the beginning of the narrative.) He washed his feet, leaving him no excuse for his wickedness, so that his apostasy might clearly be seen to be a fruit of the evil within him. **[352]**

13:12-15 After he had washed their feet, had put on his robe and had returned to the table, he said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you? You call me Lord and Teacher—and you are right, for that is what I am. So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you."

Now he clearly states the reason for his act. He says that he set an "example" of incomparable humility for our benefit. In order to make his condemnation of pride unanswerable, he needs to set forth the conspicuous example of his own person. Indeed, in this example one may see the magnitude of his incomparable humility. When anything is lowly in itself or considered worthless, how could it be diminished, or to what lower level could it descend? One may see that this quality of lowliness belongs to its nature, even if it did not descend from above. But that which is considered lofty is a source of wonder when it becomes lowly, since it came down into what it was not. Necessarily, then, our Lord Jesus Christ gives to his disciples—or rather through them to those over all the earth—a lesson in humility. He does not simply say, "Just as I washed your feet, so also you ought to do." Rather, he first explains his own honorable position. By juxtaposing his natural glory with his actions, he puts to shame those who love glory. "You" yourselves, he says, "call me Lord and Teacher—and you are right, for that is what I am."

Notice how in the midst of his discourse, he gave thought to the edification of the believers, and he was not unaware of the babbling of the unholy heretics. **[353]** He said to his disciples, "You call me Lord and Teacher." However, lest anyone think that he is not Lord or Teacher by nature but that he has these titles as honorifics given by those who would belong to him, he had to add, "and you are right, for that is what I am," to remove the suppositions of those people. After all, the Lord does not possess a mere title of honor as we do. We remain servants by nature but are made radiant by grace with titles beyond our nature and honor. He, however, is Lord by nature. He has authority over everything as God. To him the psalmist says somewhere, "All things are your servants."[24] He is also Teacher by nature. "For all wisdom is from the Lord,"[25] and all understanding comes through him. As wisdom, he makes wise the creatures capable of intellect, and in every rational creature in heaven and on earth he sows the intelligence that is fitting for it. Just as he, being life by nature, gives life to all creatures capable of life, so also, since he is the wisdom of the Father, he implants the gift of wisdom in all, namely, the knowledge and understanding of all good things. By nature, therefore, the Son is the Lord and Teacher of all.

So when I, who am so great in glory, clearly do not shrink from condescending to such lowly humility that I even "wash your feet," how could you now refuse, he says, to do this for each other? By this he teaches them not to

[22]Ezek 18:32; 33:11.
[23]Jn 13:2.
[24]Ps 119:91 (Ps 118:91 LXX).
[25]Sir 1:1.

love boasting in the honors given by others but to consider and rank their fellow servant above them in every respect. This is an excellent lesson. I do not think anyone could point out anything equal to a mind that has no interest in boasting. Nothing separates brothers and friends as much as the unbridled desire for petty glories. We are somehow always **[354]** reaching for something greater, and the empty honors of this life persuade our easily yielding mind to go after more glory. Therefore, so that we may end this disease and obtain relief from such a loathsome desire (since the passion of loving glory is nothing but a deception), let us receive as our own the mind of Christ, the king of all, who washed his disciples' feet for this reason: that we too may wash each other's feet. By this every arrogant behavior will be cut off and every form of worldly pride will be cleared away. If he who is Lord by nature acts like a servant, how could a slave who refuses to endure what is proper to that condition escape from paying the ultimate penalty?

13:16-17 "Truly, truly I tell you, servants are not greater than their master, nor are messengers greater than the one who sent them. If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them."

Christ proceeds to fortify the force of his action by appealing to necessary laws, as it were, and he shows that transgressing his saving command is extremely risky. When a law is confirmed by an oath, one cannot neglect it without blame. He says that it is an inexcusable offense for servants if they refuse to have the same mind as their masters. Longing for what is greater and beyond what we deserve is greed and nothing else. Likewise, the same charge would rightly be leveled against messengers who seek to be greater than the one who sent them, since the mind of the one who sent them should suffice as their standard of all glory. He is surely saying nothing other than this: You will be justly ridiculed before the divine tribunal if you refuse out of pride (though you share the title and position of slaves) to do for each other what I have done for you (though **[355]** I am by nature God and Lord). It would truly be strange, or rather not without a share of the most extreme madness, for servants, who are inferior to their master and sender, to blush with unsuitable shame at the idea of serving one another.

"If," then, "you know these things," he says, that is, if you can understand clearly what I am saying, "you will be blessed if you do them." One might say that it is not knowing virtue but practicing it that is worthy of love and zeal. I think perhaps it is better not to learn at all than to learn and then shackle the mind with sluggishness and refuse to carry out what one knows is the best and right course. As the Savior says, "The one who did not know the will of his master and did not do it will receive a light beating, but the one who knew it and did not do it will receive a severe beating."[26] In the case of those who sinned in total ignorance, it would not at all be inappropriate for them to ask for a degree of pardon when they are corrected for their accidental carelessness. But for those who know what they are doing, their knowledge would become a weighty factor in their condemnation. Nothing was missing for them to be able to do what is right, but they refused. One must therefore know and then act. Then, clothed in the perfect boast of citizenship in Christ, we will receive the fullest reward at that time. For example, the Savior said that whoever does and teaches "will be called great" (and rightly so) "in the kingdom of heaven."[27] After all, what does this person lack when it comes to devotion? Whoever can manifestly boast of a full measure of good deeds—how could that

[26]Lk 12:48, 47.
[27]Mt 5:19.

person not exult in the most perfect gifts of God? Therefore, whenever knowledge is accompanied by deeds, then there is surely no little profit. But when either is lacking, the other will surely be crippled. It is written that "faith without works is dead."[28] Faith is the knowledge of him who is by nature the one God and the true confession of that knowledge without deceit. [**356**] Yet even this is dead if it is not accompanied by the bright light of works. Surely, therefore, it is utterly useless to know what is good and refuse to put it into practice. That is the reason why he says his disciples (or those who believe in him) will be "blessed" not if they merely obtain knowledge of the things he said but if they also "do them."

13:18 "I am not speaking of all of you; I know whom I have chosen. But it is to fulfill the Scripture, 'The one who ate bread with me has lifted his heel against me.'"

This statement contains more than a little obscurity. He says that they will be blessed who know the good and are eager to carry it out by works. Then he immediately adds, "I am not speaking of all of you," hinting at the traitor, at least it seems so to many and also to me. After all, the enemy of God would never be classified among the zealous or the blessed, since he has made his soul answerable for such impiety. This interpretation of the passage is the one accepted by most people.

But there is another interpretation in addition to this. Christ was about to say that, in the words of the perfect and most holy Scripture, "the one who eats my bread magnified himself against me contemptuously" or "lifted up his heel against me."[29] Therefore, he offers a sort of explanation ahead of time and attends to the genuine chorus of the other disciples, attaching the force of his accusation to one individual. Since they were all eating his bread, that is, sharing in his feast and eating with him the food he was providing, he does well not to allow the mind of the innocent to be crushed by vain fears. He drives away the bite of suspicion by saying, "I am not speaking of all of you; I know whom I have chosen. But it is," he says, [**357**] "to fulfill the Scripture, 'The one who eats my bread has lifted up his heel against me,'" or, "has magnified himself contemptuously," as the psalmist says.[30] I think the passage implies something like that.

Since we have offered two meanings for the passage, let the devoted student test which is better and true. Now, however, let us comment further on these words to fortify the mind of the simple.

One might be confused about this passage in two ways. First, someone might meet us with this objection: If we believe that Christ knows everything, why did he choose Judas? And why did he associate him with the other disciples if he was not unaware that he would be convicted as a traitor and fall prey to the snare of greed within him? In addition, someone else might say: If "he has lifted his heel" against Christ "to fulfill the Scripture," as Christ himself says, he should not be held responsible for what happened, but the responsibility lies with the inevitable power that fulfilled the Scripture.

We must diligently reply to each of these objections and construct an appropriate answer to each, using the best arguments we can to build up and comfort those who are not sufficiently able on their own to understand the meaning of the divine Scripture. First, we say this: If we were going to use this kind of reasoning on everything that God does, we would never stop criticizing the creator. We would rail against God for calling into being what does not exist, ignorantly disparaging his limitless love for humanity. What, tell me,

[28]Jas 2:26.
[29]Ps 41:9 (Ps 40:10 LXX).
[30]Ps 40:10 (LXX).

would prevent others, perhaps, from bringing this accusation against him: Why did you choose Saul and anoint him as king over Israel, when you knew that he would surely reject grace? And why mention just this? The rationale for this accusation will extend all the way back to the founder of our race, that is, Adam. Perhaps someone who thinks this way will say: **[358]** Why did you, who know all, form the first man from the ground? Surely you were not unaware that he would fall and transgress the command you gave him. By the same reasoning, he now levels accusations against the higher and greater beings, shouting: Why did you create the nature of angels, since you were not unaware, as God, that the foolishness of some would lead to apostasy? Not all of them kept their own position.[31] What would result from such reasoning? The foreknowledge of God would never have allowed him to appear as creator, nor would the rational creation ever have come into existence, so that God would only rule over irrational and senseless nature, with no one even to acknowledge that he is God by nature. I think that those who investigate this matter above all others must see that the creator of all entrusted to his rational creatures the reins of their own choice, and he allowed them to follow their self-determined inclinations to whatever end each one willed after testing which way happened to be the best. Those who inclined rightly to the better preserve their own glory. They continue to participate in the blessings that have been allotted to them, and they find undisturbed tranquility. But those who are corrupted by their own arguments and dragged down to what is unlawful by unchecked torrents of desire, as it were, will suffer the penalty that is appropriate for them. They will with good reason undergo an indictment for thanklessness and will be subject to harsh and unending punishment. You will find that the nature of angels too was created within these same boundaries. Those who preserved their own position have a secure seat and position in relation to all blessings. But those who by their inclination to the worse fell from their ancient glory were "cast down to hell in chains of darkness," as it is written,[32] and are preserved "for the judgment of the great day."[33] In the same way, the first human being, that is, Adam, was created in the beginning. **[359]** He was in paradise among the highest delights (namely, those that are spiritual) and in the presence of the glory of God. And he would have remained in the original blessings of his nature if he had not turned to apostasy and disobedience, foolishly breaking the command given to him from above. In the same way, God anointed Saul as king. In the beginning, he was not a wicked man. But when it was clear that he was no longer like this, God removed him from the glory and honor of being king.

In the same way, Christ chose Judas and associated him with the holy disciples since he was gifted at first with a capacity for discipleship. But when after a little while, Satan's temptations succeeded in making him captive to base greed, when he was overcome by passion and became a traitor, then he was rejected by God. Therefore, this was in no way the fault of the one who chose him. Judas had the ability not to fall, namely, by making a more fitting choice and by transforming his own mind to become a genuine follower of Christ.

And to the other objection, we say this: Let no one suppose, as some ignorant people do, that the deeds foretold by the holy prophets come to pass simply that the Scripture may be fulfilled. If this is true, nothing at all will prevent those who by necessity carry out the Scriptures from saying that their sin is not without excuse, or rather that they have not

[31] Jude 1:6.

[32] 2 Pet 2:4.

[33] Jude 1:6.

erred at all. After all, if the Scriptures had to be fulfilled, one will say, and it was fulfilled through them, then those through whom it was fulfilled must be free from all blame. Moreover, the divine Scripture surely appeared to be a "servant of sin,"[34] summoning by force, as it were, certain people to those deeds of which it spoke, so that what was said of old may come to pass. But I think this argument is full of blasphemy. Who could ever be so devoid of proper reasoning as to think that the word of the Holy Spirit could become the patron of sin to anyone? Therefore, we do not believe that the deeds of any were done just so that the Scriptures might be fulfilled. But the Holy Spirit surely foreknew what was going to happen and spoke so that when it happened, we might take the prediction that describes the event as a pledge to strengthen our faith and acknowledge it without hesitation. Since we have a long discussion about these matters in another book, it seems superfluous to go through a long explanation about them now.[35]

13:19 "I tell you this now, before it occurs, so that when it does occur, you may believe that I am he."

It was most necessary, he says, that I give you an explanation ahead of time of events that have not yet happened. It will gladden my hearers and bring them no little profit if they understand the reason for the event. It is not my practice or my desire to waste empty discussions on the necessary point. But whatever seems to provide no small profit to you, if it should enter your knowledge, this I feel constrained to din into your ears. "Now," he says, "I tell you" of events already at the doors, and I implant in you knowledge of things that have not yet occurred, so that when they happen, you may compare the outcome of the events to my prediction, and you may believe that I am he of whom the divine Scripture prophesied such things. At one and the same time, therefore, our Lord Jesus Christ wisely attempts to correct the traitor, delivering his rebuke concealed in a little obscurity, **[361]** and he says that the outcome of the treachery would be a sign and the clearest proof that he is the Christ. As we said before, whoever compares what was predicted by the divine Scriptures with the reckless deeds of the traitor would very easily perceive with just a glance, I think, that the interpretation with reference to him is obviously true.

13:20 "Truly, truly I say to you, whoever receives one whom I send receives me; and whoever receives me receives him who sent me."

He already profitably showed before that he was the Christ. And now that he has shown the means by which the traitor was about to rage against him, he thinks of another beneficial device to overthrow his evil plot. His discourse is still somewhat obscure because he is still trying to conceal the daring deed, and he does not yet say openly who is going to betray him. He proves, then (and that quite aptly with a clear example), that we absolutely must consider the person of God the Father as the object of the love and honor that we have for Christ. Of course, his intention is not strictly to demonstrate this point, but rather the opposite, it seems. He leaves behind, it seems, the more open speech that he employed in other places (I mean, "Whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father")[36] and resorts to a euphemism, allowing the hearers to deduce from it the opposite. It was a time for threatening rather than exhortation since the daring deed was already at the doors and the outrage was already being prepared

[34]Gal 2:17.

[35]It is unclear where this discussion is.

[36]Jn 5:23.

against him. Satan had already planted the evil intention in the heart of the traitor. If any should receive the one sent by me, he says, they would surely receive me and not another. In the same way, whoever receives the one sent by God the Father would logically receive the Father himself. But in **[362]** these words of Christ, one may perceive what is meant by the euphemism. By changing the meaning to the opposite, one will see that the traitor's wickedness extends not only to the Son but to the Father himself. What he said, then, has the force of a threat, though he adorned it in euphemistic language. It conveys the same meaning as more ominous words would. Just as one of us would receive one sent by God, assent to his message, and honor the God he preaches by keeping the words of his prophecy, in the same way, I think, one would receive the Lord and through him the Father by believing in the Son. The reference to the parent is bound up with the offspring, since whoever believes that he is a Son at all will surely confess that he is a natural Son. Terrifying, therefore, is the judgment against the traitor. He committed an outrage against God the Father himself through his wickedness toward the Son. But if he had with firm faith confessed the Son to be God from God, he would have received and honored him, submitting his mind to him in sincerity as to the Lord. Then the wretched man would have made his love for Christ stronger than shameful profit, and I do not think he would have been caught in treachery, which made it better for him not to have been born.

13:21 After saying this Jesus was troubled in spirit and testified and said, "Truly, truly I tell you that one of you will betray me."

Who is there among the living who would not understand that our nature is equipped with neither concepts nor words with which we could somehow express in an infallible and irreproachable manner the properties of the divine and ineffable nature? Therefore, our nature relies on words that it can understand to provide a measure of explanation of subjects that are beyond our **[363]** comprehension. How could we speak clearly about a matter that transcends our understanding? We must therefore take the coarser human words as a kind of type of the concepts and then try to progress, as much as possible, to the divine properties themselves.

Now the divine nature is terrifying when it comes to rebukes, and it is moved by sheer hatred of evil against whoever deserves this judgment, despite the fact that it is extremely long-suffering. So when the divine Scripture wants to indicate God's emotion, as it were, against the wicked, it draws on our experience and uses human words and calls it "wrath" and "anger," even though the divine essence experiences nothing like our version of these passions. Rather, it is moved to indignation only in a way that it knows and that is natural to itself. Matters concerning God are absolutely inexpressible, but the divine Scripture has the practice of drawing on our experience to describe subjects that are above us, as we just said. So the divinely inspired Evangelist says that Christ was "troubled in spirit," referring to the Spirit's emotion of hating evil as "trouble" because there was no other way, it seems, to say it. And it certainly seems that since the flesh could not bear the emotion of the divine nature, it shuddered a little and underwent the outward form of trouble and displayed a sign of anger, just as it is of course written in the case of Lazarus that Jesus, "groaning in himself," went into the tomb.[37]

Just as in that passage he called Christ's sharp threat against death "groaning," so also here he refers to the emotion directed against

[37]Jn 11:38. In Cyril's earlier discussion of this passage, I rendered this phrase "troubled in himself," but here I render the same phrase "groaning in himself" to distinguish it from "troubled" in Jn 13:21, which is a different Greek word.

the betrayer's wickedness with the word *trouble*. And he was "troubled" for good reason, roused to indignation by the evil behavior of Judas. After all, what could be worse than the wickedness of that man, who had the same excellent honors as the other disciples, who was enrolled among the elect but for a little **[364]** money completely abandoned his love for Christ? After eating his bread, he lifted his heel against him. He esteemed not honor, not glory, not the law of love, not the reverence owed to Christ as God, nor anything else having to do with him; instead, he was focused only on the defiled denarii of the Jews. He sold his own soul for just a few pieces of silver, and he handed over innocent and righteous blood to the hands of polluted murderers. The reason for Jesus being troubled, then, makes perfect sense. His rebuke is sharp, and though it is addressed to one of the Twelve in particular, it encircled them all with this terrifying accusation and all but commanded the hearers to guard their own souls lest they carelessly be caught in such a dreadful snare and become a tasty prey of the devil's enmity. The force of the accusation, then, was beneficial. By disregarding it, the mind of the traitor was captured by its own ambitions. Next, with the greatest emphasis, Christ says, "One of you will betray me." With this statement he is either charging the audacious one with ungratefulness, or he is demonstrating the magnitude of the devil's evil, which is so powerful that it can even seize one of the apostles.

13:22 The disciples looked at one another, uncertain of whom he was speaking.

Astonishment and fear rush into the disciples and they look at one another, seething with a double turmoil over what he said. Each one of them probably reviewed his own soul and was not a little afraid. They also felt no less an agony because of the suspicion that lay upon them all in common, since they believed that what he said was surely true. They knew that **[365]** the Savior's word could not fall to the ground empty; they thought it was terrible and unbearable that one of those numbered among the disciples would sink to this wickedness. So each one examines his own conscience and looks around in dread to see to whom the lot of perdition will fall and to see from where or how Satan will obtain such power that he steals away one of Christ's genuine followers.

13:23-26 One of his disciples—the one whom Jesus loved—was reclining next to him; Simon Peter therefore motioned to him to ask Jesus of whom he was speaking. So while reclining next to Jesus, he asked him, "Lord, who is it?" Jesus answered, "It is the one to whom I give this piece of bread when I have dipped it in the dish."

We may rightly marvel in this passage as well at the fervor of the holy disciples in their love for God and at the strictness of their devotion. They could not of themselves know who the guilty person was, nor did they place their confidence in deceptive conjectures. So they want to ask a question, and they are eager to learn the answer through the one who was preeminent among them, that is, Peter. He, however, did not pose the question himself, but he entrusted the asking to the disciple next to Jesus and beloved by him because of the glory of his purity. I am talking about John, the author of the book before us, who, since he calls himself beloved, concealed his name, burying it in silence, so that he may not appear to be boasting. The mind of the saints is free from the love of glory. Gently, then, he leans over to the teacher and whispers secretly and wants to learn who the "son of perdition"[38] is. But the Savior gives him no other indication of that fact than what was foretold of old by the

[38]Jn 17:12.

voice of the prophet: [**366**] "The one who eats my bread magnified himself against me contemptuously."[39] He gives him "the piece of bread" after dipping it, thus showing him to be the one who eats his bread. And he removes the fear of the holy apostles and perhaps calls to their mind that other prophecy, which reads like this: "You, O man, like-minded, my guide, my acquaintance, who in companionship with me sweetened our food. We walked in the house of God in concord."[40] Even the traitor was once like-minded, an acquaintance, a table companion, and whatever else belongs to genuine discipleship of the Savior, inasmuch as he had a portion with the other holy disciples. They had the same purpose as the Savior and traversed the land of Judea with him. They became fervent ministers of his miracles and were eager to do everything for his honor and glory. But this like-minded acquaintance exchanged the grace of the one who honored him for shameful profit.

Next, notice how well the most wise Evangelist stirs us up to want to live as much as possible in accordance with the highest reason, and to train the keenness of our mind to be able quite easily to follow the divine intentions, and to be eager to articulate, as much as possible, the divine vision. He says that he himself was especially honored and loved by Christ our Savior so as to recline next to him at the Lord's very bosom. He considered this fact to be a sign of Christ's surpassing love for him. Of all people, those who have a pure heart, therefore, will be next to God and have the highest places next to him. The Savior himself ascribes to them this outstanding privilege when he says that the pure in heart will be blessed, "for they will see God."[41] And we will bring forward as proof of this statement the most wise Evangelist himself. He sees the glory [**367**] of Christ, according to his own account. "I have seen his glory," he says, "the glory of the Only Begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."[42] Now no one could gaze with physical eyes on that nature that is completely invisible to all creation, since "no one has seen the Father," as the Savior says, "except the one who is from God," that is, the Son; "he has seen the Father."[43] To those who keep their mind free from worldly stain and vain imagination (I mean concerning this life), Christ reveals his glory, perhaps through a subtle kind of vision above the mind, revealing in his glory also that of the Father. That is why he said, "Whoever has seen me has seen the Father."[44]

13:26-27 So when he had dipped the piece of bread, he gave it to Judas son of Simon Iscariot. After he received the piece of bread, Satan entered into him.

The Savior gave the clearest possible indication to his disciples of who the traitor was. After he dipped the piece of bread, he gave it to him, thus establishing clearly who it was who ate of his bread and who was about to lift up his heel. However, the most wise Evangelist tells us that the originator and instigator of this wicked lust for Christ's murder, the deviser of the whole scheme, rushed into the traitor's heart. Satan entered him completely after the giving of the piece of bread. Now let no one suppose that the piece of bread was the reason that the traitor received Satan. We will not reach such a level of madness or be so bereft of common sense that we imagine that the blessing[45] was given as an occasion for the entrance of the evil one. Rather, we will say this, keeping our statement about him within

[39]Ps 40:10 (LXX).
[40]Ps 55:13-14 (Ps 54:14-15).
[41]Mt 5:8.
[42]Jn 1:14.
[43]Jn 6:46.
[44]Jn 14:9.
[45]"Blessing" (εὐλογία) is the way Cyril ordinarily refers to the Eucharist.

the limits of truth: When all love **[368]** was perfectly shown to him, and nothing at all was lacking of the things that are considered to imply a disposition to confer honor, he still clung to the same pursuits, never correcting his evil intentions by repentance, never turning his heart away from its lawless designs, never weeping in bitter sorrow for the evils he had dared even to conceive. No, he thirsted even more to carry out his evil plans and so to be ruined by his own evil recklessness. So finally, "Satan entered into him," finding his heart wide open like a gate, unguarded by sobriety, and seeing his mind to be unlocked, eager and willing to do whatever he might wish and devise.

By going through the entire divinely inspired Scripture, we will find this to be a well-worn tactic of the evil one. At the beginning, he approaches and tests the heart of those who worship God. First, he sows wicked thoughts, and with base pleasures he provokes us to all manner of stumbling. He falls with extra weight on that point where he sees we have already suffered and been overcome before. He always uses our weakness as a coworker, as it were, of his wickedness and employs the passion that previously injured our mind. Thus, for example, he harasses one person with burning sensory stimulus, which is the most disgusting incentive to fleshly pleasure. But in the case of another, being overcome by base profit and procuring unholy wealth somehow seems best, and this is held up to honor. When he attacks, he makes an ally out of whatever passion has fought and conquered us in the past, and through that he devises a method to destroy us. Just as one of the best generals, when laying siege to a city, immediately focuses everything he has on the **[369]** weak parts of the wall and orders his battering engines to be put into action, knowing the city will be easy to capture there; in the same way Satan, I think, when he wants to lay siege to the human soul, goes to the weak part of it, thinking to overthrow it easily in this way, especially when he sees it receiving no assistance by which the passion would likely be defeated, like noble emotions, provocations to courage, suggestions of devotion and the mystical blessing.[46] This most of all is the effective antidote to the murderous poison of the devil.

Now the traitor was not ashamed of the rebuke, which was as yet uttered quietly and secretly, nor was he embarrassed by the invincible might of Christ's love, nor his honor and glory and grace, nor the blessing that he received from Christ. Heedlessly, as it were, and with unbroken intensity he fixed his eyes on the one thing that had overcome him before, I mean the disease of greed, until he was finally ensnared and fell to utter ruin. He no longer has Satan as his counselor, but he has now made him who merely whispered in the beginning into the lord of his whole heart and the master of his mind. For Satan "entered him," as the Gospel says.

We must therefore be on guard against and avoid with all our might the damage that comes from passions that we have previously experienced. We must remember him who says, "If the Spirit of the ruler rises up against you, do not leave your post; for soothing will keep great sins in check."[47] The Spirit of the ruler must re-create, in a way, the power of reasoning in our heart. If we do not have the power to prevent sin completely, nevertheless we do have the power to cut it off right when it enters us and not allow it to take root by lazily yielding to it. Yes, we should rush to cut it off as the beginning of bitterness, and **[370]** we should want our mind to be untroubled by it. Otherwise, we should know that Satan will prevail little by little with his flattery, and we will experience the same kind of result that the psalmist speaks of: "Before I was humbled, I

[46] I.e., the Eucharist.
[47] Eccles 10:4.

went astray."[48] Before we succumb to the final sin, first we go astray by assenting in our thoughts and receiving the sin with honor, thereby providing a place for Satan to enter. The case of the traitor will be a type and image for us of the whole matter.

13:27-28 Jesus said to him, "Do quickly what you are going to do." Now no one at the table knew why he said this to him.

Perhaps it might seem to some that this passage is out of harmony and does not fit very well with what was just said. Why, someone might say (and not inappropriately), does the Lord, after rebuking him and secretly and obscurely seeking to turn the would-be traitor from his murderous intentions toward him, now seem to urge him on to it and command him to proceed without delay to such a foul and unholy deed? And why was it necessary to urge him on, one might say, when he was sick from his own heart and urged himself to this act, instead of reining him in by admonitions to the better and hindering him from carrying out his intended plans? Now anyone would admit that this objection falls far short of proper reasoning. If we apply our mind more sharply to the meaning of the passage, we will find that nothing inappropriate was said but rather the passage contains a pointed meaning that I will try to explain briefly the best I can.

With careful foresight, the wise Evangelist said in the preceding passage that Satan forced his way into the heart of the traitor, so that **[371]** our Lord Jesus Christ is clearly addressing Satan, rather than really and truly addressing the one who carelessly fell into his power, when he said, "Do quickly what you are going to do." It is as if he said explicitly: Your work that you alone know and is ever dear to you, "do quickly." You killed the prophets. You led the Jews to false worship. In former times you arranged the stoning of those who brought the saving word to Israel. You spared none of those who were sent by God. You showed them excessive rage and cruelty beyond imagination. Now, after them, I have come. To those who now wander, I grant that they wander no more; to those in darkness, I give the divine light; to those who have fallen into your snare and have become prey to your cruelty, I provide an escape from your nets. I have come to destroy the power of the sin that you have installed as a tyrant and to show all people who is by nature God. But I know very well your implacable temper. So go ahead and do what you normally dare to do to those who accomplish such works. You will cause me no grief if you attack quickly and very decisively, no matter how great the suffering that comes to me at first.

I, at least, assume that the words of the Savior hint at this meaning. But come, let us investigate further the reason why he commands the daring deed to be hastened. Terrible indeed is the audacity of the unholy sinners who choose to rage uncontrollably against him. He could expect torture, an unbearable crowd of blasphemies, stripes and spitting, and finally the pitiful death on the tree; nails and cross, vinegar and gall, and the spear wounds. Why then does he hurry it along, one might ask, **[372]** and why does he want the outrage of his suffering to be brought about by the devil without delay? The Jews were instruments and accomplices in the crimes, but we ascribe completely to the devil the leadership to commit murder and the instigation of the crimes from the beginning. But even though the outrages committed against Christ by the unholy Jews were indeed terrible, and the arrogance of those who crucified him was unbearable, nevertheless he knew the goal of his suffering and what would result from it. The tyranny of the devil was going to fall utterly because of the precious cross. Death was going to be brought to nothing, and the power of decay was going to be destroyed. The

[48]Ps 119:67 (Ps 118:67 LXX).

human race was going to be freed from that ancient curse and finally, by the love and grace of Christ our Savior, could hope for the dissolution of the sentence, "Earth you are and to earth you will return."[49] "All iniquity," as the prophet says, was going to "shut its mouth,"[50] and those throughout the whole world who do not know the one who is truly and by nature the only God were going to be completely done away with. They would no longer accuse those who were under their power (those justified by faith in Christ). Finally, the gate of paradise was expected to be opened. The world below was going to be united with the world above, and heaven was going to be opened, as the Savior said, and the ranks of the holy angels were going to ascend and descend on the Son of Man.[51] Tell me then, since the expected blessings were so great and the hope that was reborn for us through the saving cross was so bright, how could he, who thirsted for our salvation and who for this reason became like us except for sin, not be eager to see such a thrice-longed-for moment arrive? Was it not fitting for him who knew no evil to despise the machinations of diabolical wickedness and to rush **[373]** toward arriving at the thrice-longed-for time of such a glorious feast?

The Savior addressed the words "Do quickly what you are going to do" to Satan, who did not know that he was fighting against himself and was completely ignorant that he was racing over a cliff by arranging Christ's death on the cross. This is a word of threat rather than admonition. In the same way, a handsome youth in his prime—his body swelling with strength at the sight of someone rushing to attack him—arms his right hand with a sharp axe and, knowing that his attacker is surely about to die, utters the words, "Do quickly what you are going to do! You will see the power of my right arm!" He would make this statement certainly not because he was eager to die but because he foresaw that he would prevail and conquer the one who wished to harm him. In the same way our Lord Jesus Christ urges Satan to take a quicker course to his daring assault against him. He will then show the offender to have fallen into ridicule and see that the world is free from him who long ago overpowered it by violence and conquered it by deception so that it fell away from faith in God. The disciples, however, do not know the meaning of the statement. This, it seems, is in accordance with the *oikonomia*, seeing that Christ did not reveal it to them, since in other places he clearly teaches ahead of time that he will be betrayed into the hands of sinners, crucified, killed and on the third day rise again, always charging them to tell no one.[52] His intention was to prevent the prince of this world from finding out who he truly was by nature so that when he had come, he might be crucified, and when he was crucified, he might destroy death and accomplish salvation for those who believe in him. According to his *oikonomia*, therefore, he conceals most of what he says, since as God he always knows what is best. **[374]**

13:29 Some thought that, because Judas had the common purse, Jesus was telling him, "Buy what we need for the festival"; or that he should give something to the poor.

The disciples did not understand the meaning of his words, so they readily resort to their assumptions about what was usual, and they think that the Savior is referring to what he was accustomed to command. Since the festival was near, they thought that he was ordering the one who had the "common purse" to purchase something in preparation for it, or at least that he was telling him to carry out the

[49]Gen 3:19.
[50]Ps 107:42 (Ps 106:42 LXX).
[51]Jn 1:51.
[52]Mt 17:22-23; 20:18-19; Lk 9:21.

task for which the Savior had special concern, that is, to give to the needy what he could, according to the resources available to him. For "the Lord is good and merciful," as it is written.[53] For us too, the example of this act is very noble. I think those who want to feast purely and in a way that is pleasing to God should give thought not only to their own enjoyment, and plan not just for how they alone will hold the feast joyfully, but they should weave into their plans mercy for the poor. Then—then—we will fulfill the bond of love for one another and celebrate a truly spiritual feast in honor of Christ our Savior. Indeed, the law given to the Jews in ancient times concerning the gathering of manna did not allow those who were strong enough to gather for themselves alone. "Each of you," it says, "should gather for those in your own tent."[54] If one of those in the same tent was sick, those who did not suffer from this malady, lending as it were their own vigor, gathered enough for themselves and for the others in order that, as it is written, "the one who gathered much had nothing left over, and the one who gathered little did not have too little."[55] Thus, by a sort of mingling of their stores, it was possible to preserve equality for all. Therefore, those who do not include care for the needy in their planning do not do justice to the fitting example for holy feasts. **[375]** The union of the two would truly be a perfect feast.

13:30 So, after receiving the piece of bread, he immediately went out. And it was night.

He runs full speed to do the will of Satan, and like one stung and goaded on to madness, he departs. He sees nothing at all that is more powerful than his greed, and we will find that the miracle of the blessing does him no good because of his irrepressible desire for money. Overcome by his passion and completely filled with the father of all lawlessness, the wretched man does not even see where he is running. With his heart overcome by "night" like a swarm of unholy thoughts that obscures the light, he falls into the depths of Hades into a trap. According to the passage in Proverbs, he runs like a deer "shot in the liver with an arrow" or like a dog in chains, "not knowing that he is running for his life."[56] Furthermore, it seems to me that the divinely inspired Evangelist had a good reason for saying that "after receiving the piece of bread, he immediately went out." Satan is terribly accustomed, once he has captured people and brought them under his power, to command them to carry out at once their evil deeds and to force them without any delay, even against their will, to do what he wants. Perhaps he is afraid, with his usual bitterness and malice, that in the meantime some change of mind may prepare them to repent and change for the better and to remove the pleasure of sin from their mind as if it were strong drink. This would drag them free from the devil's snare that had previously captured them. I think that is the reason the offender urges those under his control to do without the slightest delay what pleases him. For example, he forces Judas, who was under his control, **[376]** to proceed to such an unholy act immediately after receiving the piece of bread. He was probably afraid of his repentance as well as the power of the blessing,[57] lest this, shining like light in the heart of that man, might persuade him to choose to do good or at least give birth to an honest mind in a man who was seduced into betrayal.

We may also learn through what happened in type that this is the demon's habitual way of working against us. The Jews were subject

[53]Cf. Ps 103:8 (Ps 102:8 LXX).
[54]Ex 16:16.
[55]Ex 16:18.
[56]Prov 8:23.
[57]I.e., the Eucharist.

to Pharaoh when they were still in Egypt. By his command, they were bitterly oppressed by forced labor in clay and bricks, and he gave them no time for their service to God. For example, he said to their overlords, "Let the work of these people be made heavier, and let them pay no attention to vain words."[58] By "vain words" he means their escape to a state of freedom and their burning desire for this, their lament over their slavery, and their prayer for the greatest blessings. He was not unaware that in the leisure time spent on these things, they would find no small benefit. Going from the types to the knowledge of the truer objects of contemplation, we will find Satan incessantly urging those who have fallen into his nets that they need to carry out evil deeds and urging those who have already been completely overcome into the service of whatever pleases him.

13:31-32 When he had gone out, Jesus said, "Now the Son of Man has been glorified, and God has been glorified in him. And he will glorify him in himself and will glorify him at once."

The traitor departs to be a minister of the devil's schemes, and then Christ begins his discourse. By this he teaches us in a type that what is fitting only for genuine followers must not be spoken in the hearing of all. It is not right to give **[377]** what is holy to the dogs, as he says, nor to allow pearls to be trampled by the feet of swine. Now what he said before in the form of a parable, he tries to teach at a time that calls for its implementation and a clear demonstration. So after the apostasy of the traitor and his exit from the meal, Christ now, at the fitting moment, imparts the mysteries to his genuine disciples and says, "Now the Son of Man has been glorified." By this he is indicating that his saving passion is at the door and will take place in a little while. Now when he says that the "Son of Man" has been glorified, he is not referring to someone other than himself, and he is not implying a separation in himself, as some think. Christ is one Son, both before the flesh and in the flesh, both before he became a human being like us and when he had become a human being.

We must also investigate how he says he was glorified. Perhaps some might say: Was he not surely glorified before this so that he could perform miracles? When he rebuked the angry sea with one word and stopped the violence of the fierce winds, he was then worshiped by those in the boat, and he heard the words, "Truly, you are the Son of God."[59] And when he ordered Lazarus in Bethany to return to life, the report of the miracle spread abroad so that as he was going up to Jerusalem at the time of the festival, all people came out to meet him, bringing their babies. They joined in the strain of wondrous praise, saying, "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord."[60] Yes, and when he broke five loaves and two small fish, he satisfied the hunger of the multitude that had come together before him, consisting of five thousand men, not including women and children. The miracle seemed so marvelous to some, who were astonished at the surpassing magnitude of the act, that they sought to make him king. This is what the Evangelist himself has testified.[61] It would not be difficult to go through a very long discussion with many other examples **[378]** containing no less glory than the deeds we just enumerated.

How then can one who was glorified in the past say that now he has been glorified? After all, he has been glorified through other events and has shown himself to have God-befitting authority. But the perfection and fullness of

[58]Ex 5:9.

[59]Mt 14:33.
[60]Mt 21:9.
[61]Jn 6:15.

glory was surely in the fact that he suffered for the life of the world and that by his own resurrection he opened up a way for the resurrection of all. If we examine as well as we can the account of the mystery concerning him, we will see that he died not merely for himself and not strictly for his own sake, but it was for all humanity that he suffered and that he carried out both the suffering itself and the resurrection that followed. He died according to the flesh, making his own life the counterweight to the life of all, and he who is worth everyone put together fulfilled in himself the force of the ancient curse. And he rose again from the dead to imperishable and unending life, raising our whole nature in himself. Once he has died, as it is written, "he will not die again; death no longer has dominion over him. The death he died, he died to sin, once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God."[62] This will also be true of us because of Christ. Now we will be raised not to death but to unending life, even though there will be a great difference after this among those who rise—I mean a difference in glory and in the reward deserved by the conduct of each one. Christ, therefore, after becoming "obedient to God the Father to the point of death, even death on a cross," as Paul says, was highly exalted, receiving the "name that is above every name."[63] He who was thought to be a mere man was exceedingly glorified and shown to be really God and truly the Son of God. He was not promoted to a new dignity, that of being by nature God, but to what he was **[379]** even before the flesh. To this state he surely returned, even in the flesh. In this sense we will consider him to be glorified, even though he was always the Lord of glory. None of the God-befitting attributes in Christ is new to him since, as God, he has them all by nature, even before the emptying that was mentioned. But when he returned to that condition, after he had assumed the form of a slave and when he was a human being, he is understood to be glorified and is said to have "received."

And God the Father was certainly glorified along with the glorified Christ. He was "glorified in the Son" not by receiving any additional glory from his own offspring (since the divine and ineffable nature lacks nothing of this sort), but because it was made known whose Father he was. Just as it was a glory and a point of pride for the Son to have such a Father by nature, in the same way, I think, it was a glory and a point of pride for the Father to have such a Son from himself. That is why he says, "God has been glorified in him. And God will glorify him in himself and will glorify him at once." The Father is glorified at the same time because of the Son, and he glorifies the Son in return immediately. The term *glory* extends to both and through both.

However, in order to bring down the meaning of this statement to our level and provide an opportunity for the hearers to benefit, we will add this to what has been said: If we glorify God in ourselves, we can expect that we will be glorified with him. As I live, says the Lord, "I will glorify them who glorify me" and they will not be set at naught.[64] God is glorified through us and in us when we cast away the defilement of sin and adorn our lives with every good work. That is how we live to his glory. **[380]**

13:33 "Little children, I am with you only a little longer."

He classifies the disciples as infants and newborn babies, even though they had risen to such a high level of virtue and possessed wisdom that few attain. By this he shows with great clarity that one who is completely mature in the eyes of people is an infant in the eyes of

[62]Rom 6:9-10.
[63]Phil 2:8-9.
[64]1 Sam 2:30 (1 Kings 2:30 LXX).

God, and feeble in mental faculties. After all, what is human understanding in comparison to the wisdom that fashioned the universe? That is why a certain psalmist said to God, "I became like a beast before you."[65] And no one who has any sense will ever claim that the psalmist is saying he is a beast because he clings to God. That would be a bitter indictment of the divine nature, and it is obviously completely out of place. Whoever clings to a wise man is "before him" (for I must adapt the wording of the psalm to the situation). That person would never become like a beast, however, but ready of mind, intelligent and sharp in understanding. So if one were to grant that this is true (and for good reason), how would that person not be thought foolish if they supposed that one who cleaves to the wisdom of God would become a senseless beast? Why then, one might say, will someone who is very wise by human standards be seen to be a beast in comparison with the wisdom of God and be classified with those who have no intelligence? It is because human intelligence can no more be compared with the wisdom of God than the smallest star can compete with the rays of the sun or a heavy stone can surpass the highest mountain. Rather, it is nothing at all in comparison with it. Therefore, even a mature person is a "little child."

Christ said that he would be with his disciples "only a little longer," **[381]** not meaning that he would depart completely or be altogether separated from them forever, since he is with us "always, to the end of the age," as he says,[66] but that he would not be with them in the flesh, as he was yesterday and the day before. The time for his departure to the Father and ascension into heaven was at the doors, or rather, within the doors. I say that it is necessary, at least for those who think rightly and have a firm faith, to realize that even though he is absent from us in the flesh since he has made his return to God the Father, he still pervades all things with his divine power, and he is present with those who love him. That is why, of course, he says, "Truly, truly I tell you, where two or three are gathered together in my name, there I am in the midst of them."[67] Just as, while he was still sojourning with human beings on earth in the flesh, he filled the heavens and was at the same time with the holy angels and did not leave the realms above; so also now when he is in heaven in his flesh, he fills the earth and is present with those who know him. Though he expects to depart only according to the flesh, since he is still with us always by the power of the divine nature, notice how he still says that he will be with us "only a little longer," referring to his whole and perfect self without any division. That way, no one may try to divide the one Christ into two sons but may understand and accept as one subject both the Word, begotten of God the Father, and the temple,[68] taken from the holy virgin—not because they are of the same substance, but because after the ineffable union, no one may speak of dividing them without impiety, since Christ is one from both. **[382]**

"You will look for me; and as I said to the Jews so now I say to you, 'Where I am going, you cannot come.'"

He says that the departure (that is, his departure) will not be completely without pain to his disciples. First, they will melt away with grief because of it, and it will burden them with an unbearable weight of bitterness. No doubt, they will thirst to be with him once again, and they will long to live with him forever, just as the divinely inspired Paul of course prefers being with Christ to life here, saying that it is better

[65]Ps 73:22 (Ps 72:22 LXX).
[66]Mt 28:20.
[67]Mt 18:20.
[68]Cf. Jn 2:21.

"to depart and be with Christ."[69] Christ sees these things, and he is not unaware of the heart of those who love him. So he says that his ascension will not be without grief for the disciples. But besides this, there was another legitimate reason that forced the holy disciples to want to be with Christ. In just a little while, they were going to encounter no small dangers and to be struck hard by the uncontrollable madness of the Jews. They would even fall victim to the madness of other people as they traveled through the whole world, preaching the word of the Savior to those who were still wandering. They would undergo the trial of prison, they would have their fair share of insult and outrage, and they would gain no less experience of other tortures, though they had experienced none of these things before while they were with Christ. Especially then, he says, "you will look" for my company, when many waves of trial break over you. He said this not to lead them into cowardice or to shatter the disciples with fear ahead of time but to brace them with fresh vigor and to teach them, as it were, to be prepared to endure the trials they could expect to happen. We will find what is sung in the Psalms not to be without profit, but rather **[383]** one may see that it contains great benefit: "I was prepared, and I was not terrified."[70] The wholly unexpected arrival of misfortune usually throws us into confusion and attacks us by surprise. But when a trial is expected and known about ahead of time, the greater part of the fear it brings has passed away by the time it gets here. It does not have full power to proceed against us since the mind has prepared for it and has often taken it as already present, as far as the power of thought is concerned. If some wild and savage beast comes out of a dense and luxuriant jungle and pounces on someone who does not see it coming, it tears apart the one who does not see the attack and seizes and carries off the one who was not prepared to fight. But if the beast is seen from afar and its coming is expected, it meets an armed foe and either does less harm, perhaps, or leaves without being strong enough to do anything. It is the same, I think, for trials. A trial that is completely unexpected will strike us with more vigor and savagery than one that has been expected for a while. Therefore, when our Lord Jesus Christ says, "You will look for me," he is beneficially hinting at the trials that will occur because he is no longer with his disciples and the troubles that will come from their enemies, preparing them by exhorting them to take up their courage.

Furthermore, he profitably adds that there will be an obstacle to prevent them from following him at the present. What I said to the Jews, he says, this I now say also to you: "Where I am going, you cannot come." The time had not yet come for the holy apostles to go to the mansions above, since they had not yet finished their service. Their entrance into that condition was being kept for the proper time.

However, we must observe this as well: when he was addressing the Jews and saying the same thing to them, he said, "You will look **[384]** for me, and you will not find me." But to his disciples, he says only, "You will look for me." He appropriately omits, "You will not find me." And why is that? Not finding him is fitting for the former group because of their limitless unbelief and their excessive irreverence toward him. But to those who have a genuine attitude toward him and have preserved their love in all sincerity, it would not be proper to say, "You will not find me," since he was with them and will be with them always.

13:34 "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another."

Beautifully and truly, the divinely inspired Paul writes, "So if anyone is in Christ, there is

[69]Phil 1:23.
[70]Ps 118:60 (LXX).

a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!"[71] He re-creates us and refashions us to newness of life, which is unknown to and untraveled by others who love to live by the law and to observe the commands given through Moses. "The law makes nothing perfect," as it is written.[72] But one may observe that the standard of reverence toward God in the commands of our Savior is the highest reverence possible. That is why he also says to us somewhere, "Truly, truly I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven."[73] We should not compete with the way of life of the Jews, but unless we greatly outstrip the righteousness in the law, I doubt we will ever enter the kingdom of heaven.

Now we do not assert that the law given through Moses is completely useless and unprofitable. After all, it brought us what is good, albeit imperfectly. So it is found to be a tutor for instruction in the gospel way of life. By introducing an image of the true worship in enigmas and types, it engraved, so to speak, the shadow of Christ's teaching on our mind. **[385]** That is why he himself said, "For I tell you, every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like a rich man who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old."[74] It is truly spiritual wealth for a person to be thoroughly acquainted with the words of Moses and to have their benefit stored up in the mind, while at the same time to receive the beauty of the gospel teaching and to have two grounds for boasting: knowledge of the old laws and of the new. Therefore our Lord Jesus Christ shows that his command is better than the ancient ones and that his saving proclamation was still unknown to those who lived by the law. As he was about to ascend to heaven, he lays down the law of love as a foundation and cornerstone, as it were, of every blessing. And this love is not according to the law, but transcends the law. That is why he says, "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another."

How then, tell me, perhaps someone might say, did he call this a new commandment when he had already said through Moses to the ancients, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your mind, and you shall love your neighbor as yourself"?[75] See! See, by placing love for God ahead of love for others, he has introduced in the very next place our love for each other, and he has yoked together, as it were, our love for each other with love for God so that the only way love for God could be right is if it is accompanied by the love due our neighbor, since we are all brothers of each other. The most wise John, for example, who has the most beautiful knowledge and teaches it to others, says, "Whoever loves his brother, loves God."[76] How then is Christ's commandment new, when it is expounded in the ancient laws? Well, look at what clinches it. Notice the additional clause. It was not enough for him to say, "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another." **[386]** He shows the novelty of his statement and demonstrates that his kind of love is far better than the ancient love (I mean love for each other) by immediately adding, "Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another."

In order to understand the meaning of this statement clearly, we must now investigate how Christ loved us. Then—then will we see (and quite easily) what is new and different about the command he now gives. So, "though he was in the form of God, he did not regard equality with God something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave,

[71] 2 Cor 5:17.
[72] Heb 7:19.
[73] Mt 5:20.
[74] Mt 13:52.
[75] Lk 10:27; Deut. 6:5.
[76] 1 Jn 4:21.

being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross."[77] And again, "though he was rich, yet he became poor," as Paul testified to us somewhere.[78] Do you see what is new about his love for us? The law commanded us to love our brother as ourselves. But our Lord Jesus Christ loved us more than himself. Otherwise he would not have descended to our humble state when he was in the form of and equal to God the Father, nor would he have undergone such a bitter death of the flesh for us, nor would he have endured the buffeting of the Jews, the shame, the derision, and all the rest (lest we extend our discourse to an interminable extent by enumerating everything that happened to him). Nor would he have become poor when he was rich if he did not love us very much, even more than himself. Marvelous, then, was the extent of his love. He commands us to have this disposition as well, considering nothing at all more important than love for the brothers: not glory, not riches, not even hesitating to undergo the death of the flesh for him if necessary, so that we may obtain the salvation of our neighbor.

And this is exactly what the blessed disciples of our Savior have done, and those who followed in their footsteps. **[387]** They considered the salvation of others more important than their own life. They endured all kinds of toil and suffered extreme evil in order to save the souls of those who were perishing. For example, Paul says at one time, "I die every day,"[79] and at another, "Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is made to stumble, and I am not indignant?"[80] Therefore, the Savior commanded us to practice love that transcends the law, which is the root of the perfect worship of God, knowing that in this way and no other we will be completely approved in the sight of God, and that by tracing out the beauty of the love he implanted in us, we will obtain great and perfect blessings.

13:35 "By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

You will inscribe on your own heads, he says, an irrefutable and unambiguous mark of having been my disciple if you are eager to follow in the footsteps of my way of life, to the extent that your nature and the limits of your humanity will allow. In this way, you will maintain an unbroken bond of love for one another and you will live in beautiful harmony with one another, at least when it comes to mutual love and the incomparable glory of affection. This is what will imprint in us a precise stamp of the glory of our teacher. But perhaps someone might meet us with this question in response: Why is love the mark of discipleship under Christ, when he displayed the form of all virtues in himself, and this did not come from gentleness, nor did he receive it by labor and attention, as in the case of humans, but it sprang from him by nature? His attributes belong to the divine nature, and to that nature, truly and strictly speaking, belong qualities that surpass all wonder. **[388]**

In fact, sir, we will reply, you were absolutely correct in adding your last remark. Properly and strictly speaking, the attributes that spring from the divine nature are the fruit of the highest essence. But it is possible to see, by looking into the matter, that every species of virtue is fulfilled in love and that everything one might rightly consider to be good has love as its focus and aim. That is of course why the first commandment laid down by the law is to love the Lord God with all your soul and with all your heart and with all your mind.[81] The

[77]Phil 2:6-8.
[78]2 Cor 8:9.
[79]1 Cor 15:31.
[80]2 Cor 11:29.
[81]Mk 12:30.

love for neighbor is the second, sister and neighboring commandment, and it completes the law. For example, the divinely inspired Paul, summarizing the whole law with this point, writes, "'You shall not commit adultery; You shall not murder; You shall not swear'; and any other commandment, are summed up in this word, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' Therefore, love is the fulfilling of the law."[82] The most wise Paul himself also testifies that love has created for itself a form of every virtue within the limits of itself and that it embraces in its arms, as it were, all that is good when he cries out, "Love does not boast, it is not puffed up, it is not rude, it does not seek its own,"[83] and similar expressions (since it would take a long time to express the limits of love). Indeed, I say that it is especially fitting and right for those who have chosen a life of love to make known to all that they have become Christ's disciples by making the crown of love their chief glory and by carrying their affection for each other as a sign of that fact.

I will briefly explain the reason for this. Now if any of us were practicing the art of working in brass or weaving, would it not be perfectly obvious that this person was a disciple of some brassworker or weaver? And what about someone who shows some experience in carpentry? Would they not declare that the reason they can succeed in this skill is that **[389]** they had an experienced carpenter as their guide? In the same way, I think, those who have the full power of divine love in them will quickly make known to the world that they are disciples of love, or of Christ who possesses ultimate love. He loved the world so much that he laid down his life for it and endured the ferocity of the Jews' audacious attacks on him. He himself bears witness to this, saying to his own disciples, "No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends."[84] Since "God is love," as John says,[85] and he is the Son of love, that is, of him who is by nature the only true God, he himself is revealed to us as love, not resting his claim to this glorious honor on words or boasting, but showing by his deeds and actions that he is the fruit of the substance of his parent. We will certainly not imagine that the highest essence is in a position to receive good properties, nor will we claim that it has the form of all good attributes in itself as something newly acquired, as is the case with us, nor is it to be understood as something that happens to be in something else, as one might say that knowledge of something is in a person. After all, a person is not knowledge per se, but is rather receptive of knowledge. No, we say that the divine and ineffable nature is, strictly speaking, the sum of all that is good, whatever that is believed to be, containing in itself every kind of virtue and pouring it out like a fountain.

It makes perfect sense, then, that he who is the fruit of love will himself also be love, since the Son of the Father is like the one he is from. Therefore, he will be shown forth in our lives chiefly through love, and he engraves on us the mark of fellowship with him in virtues, which is to hold fast to love for one another. Besides, as Paul says, Christ is "our peace,"[86] **[390]** since in him all things are joined together, the things below with the things above. Through him we were reconciled to God the Father, even though in ancient times we often fell away by running off to evil. Once we were divided into two peoples, Gentiles and Israel, but he has created one new humanity in himself,[87] since he has broken down the dividing wall of separation.[88] The power of hatred has been abolished, since the law was silenced by the

[82]Rom 13:9-10.
[83]1 Cor 13:4-5.
[84]Jn 15:13.
[85]1 Jn 4:16.
[86]Eph 2:14.
[87]Eph 2:15.
[88]Eph 2:14.

gospel teachings. How could people who are not at peace with each other be recognized as disciples of peace? And what else would a lack of peace be than a stirring up of fighting, an overthrow of peace and an introduction of every sort of discord? Just as the blessings of peace are preserved among us by the unbroken bond of love, so also I think by the interruption of love, the evils of fighting find their way in. And what is the result of all this? Insults arise, and love of strife and jealousies and anger and wrath and whispering and slander and envy and all kinds of evil.

Therefore, since every virtue is summed up and fulfilled in the form and habit of love, let us not think highly of ourselves for fasting or sleeping on the ground or other burdens of asceticism if we do not carefully preserve love for the brother. Otherwise, we will be carried wide of the turning posts like unskilled charioteers, and we will wander off course like a pilot who holds the ship's rudder but who ignorantly misses the destination of the voyage. For this reason, the one who boldly said, "Do you seek proof of Christ speaking in me?"[89] (I mean the divinely inspired Paul) boasted not simply in making progress but in progressing toward a goal. I think that to boast in physical labors **[391]** while falling short of the more important and necessary virtues is to fail at progressing toward the goal. He knows so well that love is like a cornerstone of every virtue that he contends for it most beautifully with the statement, "If I give away all my possessions, if I hand over my body to be burned, but do not have love, I gain nothing. If I speak in the tongues of humans and of angels, but do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal."[90] Therefore, the boast of love is the face and image of Christ the Savior in us.

[89]2 Cor 13:3.
[90]1 Cor 13:3, 1.

13:36 Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, where are you going?"

Peter, with his usual curiosity, wants to know more, and he busies himself with the meaning of the statement. He does not yet understand what the statement means, it seems, but he brings to bear his fervent desire to follow Christ. The company of the disciples is admirable in this matter. Certainly no one would say that while the others understood, only their chief happened to be ignorant, and that is why he was the one who asked the question. Rather, since he ranks first, they are letting him speak first (I mean in asking the direct question). After all, speaking into the ears of the teacher is no light matter, even for those who are "reputed to be something."[91] And Peter is no less admirable. He is not ashamed to seem dull as he asks for the knowledge of what he does not know. Instead, he runs right to the need to become wise and considers the advantages of learning to be greater than inappropriate embarrassment, so that he may become an example in this matter for those who come after him. So I think we must never allow the words of our teacher to pass by us—even if they may not be very clear—just so that we may seem to be shrewd and very sharp in our understanding. Rather, we must inquire and search out wisely what we received in the beginning for our profit. The knowledge of what is useful is far better **[392]** than a vain semblance of knowledge, and truly learning something is better than just seeming to know all about it.

Jesus answered, "Where I am going, you cannot follow me now; but you will follow afterward."

Since he knows that he would subject his disciples to heavy and unbearable grief if he told them plainly that he was going to ascend

[91]Gal 2:6.

into heaven and leave them bereft of his presence on earth, even though he would be with them as God, he employs words that are well adapted to their present condition, gently hiding his precise intentions. Seeing them in ignorance, he allows them to remain so. The wise, after all, sometimes use weighty words to cloak distressing news in the shadows. He was preparing for his departure up to heaven in order to offer himself to God the Father as the first fruits of humanity, and this act was for the benefit of all, since he opened up a road for us that human nature did not know before. Nevertheless, for the holy disciples, who were eager to be with him always, Christ's departure seemed unbearable, even though he would always be with them by the power and cooperation of the Holy Spirit. So he allows the blessed Peter, along with the other disciples, to remain ignorant of the meaning of what he said. Mercifully, he does not provide an immediate and precise explanation of his statement until he finishes the discourse that enables them to bear it. We will see him do this in what follows. There he says to them, "It is better for you if I go away, for if I do not go away, the Paraclete will not come to you."[92] However, as God he quickly promises the disciple who eagerly and fervently wants to follow him and be with him that no one will turn him away from this desire. He says, "Where I am going, **[393]** you cannot follow me now; but you will follow afterward."

Now this statement is pregnant with a double meaning. The first is obvious and well known, but the second is rather unclear and wrapped in obscurity. He is saying that Peter would not be able to follow him now, as he journeys on high and returns to heaven, but afterward he will follow, that is, when the hoped-for honor and glory are conferred on the saints by Christ when they reach the city above and reign with him.

[92]Jn 16:7.

In addition to this, it means something else, which I will now explain. The disciples had not yet been "clothed with power from on high,"[93] nor had they received the one who would strengthen them and refashion human nature to be courageous, I mean the Holy Spirit. So they were not able to wrestle with death or stand up to terrors that are so hard to face. Besides, it would have been incredible (since the ability to shatter the power of death is proper to and reserved for Christ the Savior alone) for others to be seen doing this ahead of him. Not fearing death—what else could this be than despising death as having no power to hurt us? That is why, at least in our opinion, even the blessed prophets themselves shuddered at the approach of death, since it had not yet been destroyed by Christ's resurrection. Paul's correct understanding of this led him to say that the Word, who is from God the Father and in God, laid hold of the seed of Abraham so that by the death of his holy flesh, he might destroy death[94] "and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by the fear of death."[95] The saving passion is the first deliverance from death, and the resurrection of Christ has become the source of the saints' courage in facing it. But since our natural life has not yet abolished death, nor has it shattered the terror that it casts over our souls, **[394]** the disciples were still weak in the face of these dangers. Therefore, the Lord, in his statement, gracefully gestures at the fact that Peter would be crucified when the time had come, and in that sense follow him. Furthermore, by saying, "Where I am going, you cannot follow me now; but you will follow afterward," he hints that Peter's mind is not yet prepared for such a trial. If Christ is not subtly referring to Peter's death in this statement, why then does he address the words to

[93]Lk 24:29.
[94]Heb 2:16, 14.
[95]Heb 2:15.

the person of Peter alone, even though the other holy apostles have the promise of being with him and following him (at the time of the resurrection, that is, when a spotless life is bestowed on them along with all the blessings for which they hope)? No, it is clear that he is addressing Peter and enigmatically displaying what will happen to him in the future. For instance, he reveals this more clearly in other words when he says, "When you were younger, you used to fasten your own belt and to go wherever you wished. But when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will fasten a belt around you and take you where you do not wish to go. He said this," adds the Evangelist, "to indicate the kind of death by which he would glorify God."[96] Even though suffering for Christ is a sweet thing for the saints, they do not wish for this danger. Yet it is bearable when it has to be borne. Therefore, he also commands us to pray that we not fall into temptation.

13:37 Peter said to him, "Lord, why can I not follow you now? I will lay down my life for you."

What is there to prevent him, he says, or hold him back from following, now that his aim is to die for his teacher, and he considers this his proudest boast? After all, the endpoint of all this danger and the summit, as it were, of the untamed violence of his persecutors **[395]** will extend no further than the flesh. That is what death affects. But who could prevent the one, he says, who is already ready and prepared for this? Who could take away his intense conviction that he must follow to the end? Peter's desire was fervent, and the extent of his promise was excessive. Yet one can see that his power was not insignificant, or rather the outcome of the events themselves proved this. One point, however, must be considered. Christ our Savior gives indications all over the place of his departure into heaven, saying that Peter will not follow now but will follow later, that is, as soon as his apostolate is fulfilled and the time comes to call the chief saints to the city above. Peter himself protests, however, that he is ready now even to risk his life, going down a different road, as it were, not immediately arriving at the meaning of Christ's words. Let me explain. Peter does not yet understand the precise meaning of Jesus' words. Perhaps he thinks that the Lord is about to travel to wilder villages of Judea or even to foreign peoples, who, after carefully listening to what he is going to say, will so violently dissent from it that the madness of the Pharisees will seem downright gentle in comparison with the audacity of the other Jews. So he declares that no obstacle will prevent him from following not only to the point of death but even to the point of not hesitating to die if death is required. Now there is a passage similar to this earlier in the book, and next I will tell you where it occurs.

At one time Christ was sojourning in Galilee to avoid the senselessness of the Jews, their sheer anger and their unbridled tongue. And he was admired for performing many wonders among them. When the brother of Mary **[396]** and Martha died (I mean Lazarus), he knew it as God, and he said to his disciples, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I am going there to awaken him."[97] In response to this, the disciples, out of their love for him, say, "The Jews were just now trying to stone you, and are you going there again?"[98] When Christ gets up to leave and insists that he must surely go to the country of the Jews, "Thomas, who was called the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, 'Let us also go, that we may die with him.'"[99] I think that the

[96]Jn 21:18-19.

[97]Jn 11:11.
[98]Jn 11:8.
[99]Jn 11:16.

intent of Peter's statement is pregnant with some meaning like this. Perhaps he thinks, as I said before, that Jesus is about to go off somewhere and preach and put himself in danger at the hands of his hearers. Therefore, he himself, in his uncontrollable love, promises that he will maintain an invincible and irresistible zeal for this, saying that there is now nothing left that is strong enough to stop him. He has decided that he must follow, since his intention is to die for his teacher.

13:38 Jesus answered, "Will you lay down your life for me? Truly, truly I tell you, before the cock crows, you will deny me three times."

Despite his remarkable zeal in this matter, Peter promises more than he can deliver. Christ, however, seeing the gloom of the impending storm, the difficulty of the trial, and the magnitude of the persecution, all but shakes his head. He unfolds, as it were, the entire passion before his eyes; he sees the utter senselessness of the Jews; he gazes upon the events that will take place in their proper time. He exclaims something like this: "Your life," Peter, "you will lay down for me?" And you say that you have no fear about that? [**397**] Do you assume that you will be more powerful than what is going to happen? No, you do not understand the weight of the coming temptation. You will not be strong enough to endure it. Your heart will utterly fail you, even though you do not want it to, and "you will deny me three times," and this in a single night. We must suppose that Jesus intended to say something like that.

We must also marvel, however, at the admirable love for humanity that is contained in this statement. He has just said that the strength of Peter's soul will not match his intense zeal, but he will cower and yield so much that he will deny Christ merely out of fear of that danger. Yet Christ does not add one threatening word, perhaps because Peter was not speaking under divine influence. At any rate, for some reason, he does not hold out the threat of punishment to one who suffered from human frailty.[100] He knew that his nature was still weak and could not endure the threat of death. Death, after all, was not yet destroyed by his resurrection. It still vaunted itself against the minds of all and was sufficient to crush even the boldest and most courageous person with fear alone. Our nature is unnaturally subject to death and yields to it as a conqueror, or rather it used to yield in the past. But since Christ has broken its bonds, the approach of death is sweet for those who love Christ, even though it comes in bitterness. That is because eternal life arrives instead, destroying the power of decay.

Let no one imagine, however, that Peter lost his strength and issued his denial because of Christ's statement here. Christ did not say these things to impose some necessity or to drag him by force into the suffering he describes. Rather, he is predicting what he knows, as God, will surely and doubtlessly happen to his disciple.

Now since what happened to people in former times was written down for the instruction of those who came after them,[101] come let us say something necessary for our edification, drawing on this section. I think that we should not be too quick to make a promise to [**398**] God, or to pledge to perform what sometimes may be beyond our powers, as if we controlled events. I say this considering the charges we would incur for failure. Above all, I do not think that hasty statements such as "I will do this" or "I will do that" are free from pride. In every matter in which one has chosen or wills to do something, one should really say what the most wise disciple has said:

[100]There is a lacuna in one of the manuscripts in this sentence.
[101]1 Cor 10:11.

"If the Lord wills and we live."[102] I do maintain that the desire to do good needs to be present in the souls of those who love God, as does the eager choice to carry out virtue with one's whole strength, but one must pray for the means to accomplish these by the grace that comes from above and not make rash promises as if success were in our own grasp. Thus, we will keep unbroken our promise to God in all that is good, and we will have "our feet clear" of blame, as the Greek poet says.[103] Or put in another way, "It is better not to vow than to vow and not fulfill it."[104]

14:1 "Do not let your heart be troubled."

When he said that Peter's courage would fail him so utterly that he would deny him three times and succumb to this in one night, he basically gave them a glimpse of the sheer terror of the dangers through the excessive magnitude of the event. Therefore, the disciples may well have immediately asked each other (and for good reason): What is the nature and extent of the fear of these impending troubles, and what is the temptation that is so invincible that it overcomes our leader and casts him down, not once, but many times in the same assault, and in a brief time? Who among us will escape even worse calamities? How will anyone else stand firm when Peter is shaken and yields to the weight of what happened to him as if by necessity? In vain, then, **[399]** we have endured toils for the sake of our duty to follow him. Our efforts result only in a loss of sweat, even though they seem to offer the prospect of life with God. It is not unlikely that the disciples thought these things within themselves. Since he needed to restore their shaken mind, he applies the necessary medicine, as it were, to their worries and fears about this and orders them to arm themselves with serenity, saying, "Do not let your heart be troubled."

Notice, however, how he promises in a shrouded way to forgive their future cowardice. He does not say explicitly, "I will forgive even those who are weak" or "I will be no less present with those who deny me or flee," so that he does not completely remove their fear of shame or completely take away their concern about stumbling, thus rendering their transgression a light matter and teaching them to pay no attention to the blame of denial. By telling them they should not be troubled, he placed them in the middle between hope and fear, so that for those who are weak and succumb to human frailty, the hope of mercy might help them to recover, while the fear of stumbling might urge them to fall only a few times. (They did not yet have the ability not to fall at all, since they were not yet clothed with power from above and from on high,[105] that is, the grace that comes through the Spirit.) He tells them, therefore, not to be troubled, and with that teaches them that those who are about to struggle and to undertake the most glorious labors surely ought to be above cowardice. An untroubled mind is a great help to courage. At the same time, though rather obscurely and not very clearly, he is clandestinely sowing the hope of forgiveness, in case they should **[400]** sink into fear out of human weakness. After all, a mind that is not yet established by grace from above is fearful and easily disturbed and quick to be confused. That is why the most wise Paul writes this prayer for certain people: "And the peace of Christ, which passes all understanding, will guard your heart,"[106] that is, so that your heart may not be troubled.

"Believe in God, believe also in me."
He makes a soldier out of one who is now a

[102]Jas 4:15.
[103]Aeschylus, *Prometheus* 263.
[104]Eccles 5:5 (Eccles 5:4 LXX).
[105]Lk 24:49.
[106]Phil 4:7.

coward, and from the very wounds of fear he commands a fervent faith to be fashioned. That is how we are saved and not otherwise, according to that song somewhere in the Psalms: "The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?"[107] With the almighty God fighting for us and defending us, who could harm us? And who by any chance will advance to such power that they subject the elect to themselves and impose on them the evil designs of their perverse imagination? Or who could capture with a spear those who wear the full armor of God? Faith, then, is a weapon whose blade is stout and broad. It drives away cowardice that comes from thinking about possible suffering, and it renders the darts of the wicked utterly ineffective and utterly useless in their temptations.

Since that is the nature of faith, we must next examine the following point. He commanded them to believe not only in God, but also in him, not because he was something other than God by nature (I mean insofar as the identity of essence is concerned) but because to believe in God and to think that faith must be directed to this term alone is a characteristic supposition of the Jews, while the inclusion of the term *Son* in faith in God [**401**] is a clear injunction of the gospel proclamation. It is necessary to believe (at least for those who think rightly) in God the Father, and in not simply the Son but in the incarnate Son, and in the Holy Spirit. The holy and consubstantial Trinity is distinguished by the differences in names and the qualities and attributes of the persons. The Father is the Father and not the Son; the Son is the Son and not the Father; and the Holy Spirit is the Spirit, belonging to the divine nature. Yet the Trinity is summed up in the same essence, giving us not three but one God. Still, I say we must maintain the accurate distinctions of our faith, not simply saying, "We believe in God"[108] but unfolding our confession and ascribing to each person the same glory. There is no distinction in the faith within us. We do not have greater faith in the Father and less faith in the Son and the Holy Spirit, but the definition and manner of our confession is one and the same. That confession puts the three names on the same level, so that, going through these names and arriving at the unity of nature, the holy Trinity may be shown, as well as the utterly unimpeachable glory that shines around the Trinity, so that faith in the Father, and in the Son, and in the fact of his incarnation, and in the Holy Spirit may be found in our souls.

And I think that no one, if they were wise, would make a division between the temple formed from the Virgin and God the Word (I mean as far as the fact of sonship is concerned). "For there is one Lord Jesus Christ,"[109] as Paul says. Whoever divides the one and only Son into a dyad of sons, let them realize that they are surely denying the faith. For example, when the divinely inspired Paul weaves together a fine and utterly correct discourse on these matters, he does not introduce the bare Only Begotten as an object of faith, but the Only Begotten who has come into our condition, that is, who has become a human being, has died and [**402**] has risen from the dead. What does he say? "The word is near you, on your lips and in your heart (that is, the word of faith that we proclaim); because if you say with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For one believes with the heart and so is justified, and one confesses with the mouth and so is saved."[110] Now if we believe in the Son as the resurrected one, who is it who died that he might rise again? Clearly, he is understood to

[107]Ps 27:1 (Ps 26:1 LXX).

[108]This is similar to the first phrase of the Nicene Creed.
[109]1 Cor 8:6.
[110]Rom 10:8-10.

have died according to the flesh. His own body was imprisoned by death and rose to life again, since the body belonged to him who was life by nature. It fully bore the attribute of him who dwelled in it and who was ineffably united to it, that is, life-giving energy. Therefore, whenever anyone divides them, parceling out the flesh from the one who dwells bodily in it, and dares to say that there are two sons, let them realize that they believe only in the flesh. The divine Scriptures teach us to believe in him who was crucified, died and raised from the dead, not as someone besides God the Word who dwells in the flesh. I am not saying there is an identity of essence (for the body is the body and not the Word, even though it is the body of the Word), but they are the same in the matter of true sonship. If anyone thinks that we have not spoken well, let them come forward and show us the Word of God (insofar as he is understood as God) to be dead, which is impossible, or rather blasphemous even to think.

14:2-3 "In my father's house there are many mansions. If it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you with me, so that were I am, there you may be also."

After telling them not to be troubled, as he needed to, **[403]** and commanding them to believe in God the Father and also in him, he now clearly tells them, as an encouragement to their feeble heart, that they will not remain outside the holy courts but will dwell in the mansions above and live an eternal life in the church of the firstborn with endless blessings. And he says that there are "many mansions" in the Father's house, teaching that heaven is spacious and that the creation he has made has no need at all for any addition to enable it to contain those who love him. Furthermore, it seems likely that by saying there are "many mansions," he intends to signify different levels of honor, with each one who desires to live a life of virtue receiving their own place, as it were, and the glory that is appropriate for their accomplishments. Now if the mansions in God the Father's house had not been many, he would have said that he was going ahead of them to prepare the dwellings of the saints. But since he knew that there were many mansions already prepared and awaiting the arrival of those who love God, he does not say that he will depart for that reason, but rather to prepare for you a pasture, as it were, and a "place" on the way that leads above, and to smooth out the road that from ancient times has been impassable. After all, heaven was completely inaccessible to human beings, and no flesh had ever walked in that pure and all-holy realm of the angels.

Christ was the first one who consecrated for us the road that leads up to there. He gave to flesh a place on the road to heaven by offering himself to God the Father as a kind of "first fruit of those who are asleep"[111] and lying in a mound of earth. He was the first human being to be seen in heaven. Accordingly, the angels in heaven, who did not know about the august and stupendous mystery of the incarnation, were astonished at his coming and all but cried out at this strange and **[404]** unaccustomed event, saying, "Who is this that comes from Edom?"[112] that is, from the earth. But the Spirit did not leave the hosts above uninstructed about the remarkable wisdom of God the Father. Rather, he commanded them to open the heavenly gates to the king and Lord of all, crying out, "Lift up the gates, O you princes; and be lifted up, you everlasting doors, and the King of Glory will come in!"[113] Our Lord Jesus Christ opened for us a "new and living way,"[114] as Paul says, not "entering a

[111] 1 Cor 15:20.
[112] Is 63:1.
[113] Ps 24:7 (Ps 23:7 LXX).
[114] Heb 10:20.

sanctuary made by human hands, but entering heaven itself, now to appear before the presence of God on our behalf."[115]

Christ did not ascend to present himself before the presence of God the Father; he was and is and always will be in the Father and in the sight of his begetter. He is the one in whom the Father continually delights.[116] The Word, who in ancient times was devoid of humanity, now ascended as a human being to present himself in a strange and unaccustomed way. This was for us and on our behalf so that, being found as a human being, he might hear along with all flesh in his power as the Son the words, "Sit at my right hand."[117] Thus he transferred the glory of adoption to the entire race through himself. He is one of us, after all, as he sits at the right hand of God the Father (in that he appeared as a human being), even though he is superior to all creation and is of the same substance as the one who begat him (in that he came from him), God from God and light from light in truth. So he presented himself as a human being on our behalf to the Father so that he might place us—we who departed from his presence because of the ancient transgression—once again in the presence of the Father. He took his seat as Son so that we too might be called sons and children of God through him. That is why Paul, who insists that Christ is speaking in him,[118] teaches us to regard the events that happened to him personally as common to human nature in general. **[405]** He says, "He raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ." The dignity of his seat belongs to Christ by nature as the Son, and we can rightly and truly ascribe the glory of sitting there to him and him alone. But the fact that Christ who sits there is completely like us, in that he appeared as a man, while at the same time we understand him to be God from God—that fact transfers, as it were, the grace of that dignity also to us. Even if we do not sit with him next to the Father (since how could the slave ever ascend to the same honor as the master?), nevertheless he promised the holy disciples that they would sit on thrones. "For when," he says, "the Son of Man is seated on the throne of his glory, you too will be seated on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel."[119]

Therefore, he says, I will not depart to prepare mansions for you. Many are already there, so it would be superfluous to make new ones. I will prepare a place for you so that those who are pinned down on earth because of sin may finally be able to mingle with the holy angels. Otherwise the holy multitude of those above would never have mingled with people so impure. But now that I have accomplished this and joined those below with those above, giving you a place on the road up to the city above, I will come again at the renewal of all things "and will take you with me, so that where I am, there you may be also." That is also what Paul is thinking when he says in his epistle, "For this we declare to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will by no means precede those who have died. For the Lord himself, with a cry of command, with the archangel's call and with the sound of God's trumpet, will descend from heaven, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up in the clouds together with them to **[406]** meet the Lord in the air; and so we will be with the Lord forever."[120]

14:4 "And you know where I am going; and you know the way."

[115]Heb 9:24.
[116]Prov 8:30.
[117]Ps 110:1 (Ps 109:1 LXX).
[118]2 Cor 13:3.
[119]Mt 19:28.
[120]1 Thess 4:15-17.

I will depart first, he says, to prepare a place for you on the road to heaven. But if you wish and it is your desire to rest in those mansions, and you have made every effort to arrive at the city above and dwell in the company of the holy spirits, then "you know the way," that is, me. Through me and no one else will you obtain such extraordinary grace. No one else will open the heavens for you or ever render passable that completely strange and untrodden region for the people of the earth, except for me alone. And that claim is true. That is why the prophet Jeremiah also urged us in the Spirit to seek this way above all else, saying, "Stand on the ways and ask for the eternal paths of the Lord. See what the good way is and walk on it, and you will find purification for your souls."[121] The ways and paths of the Lord are the saving precepts of the holy prophets, but if anyone places their mind upon it, they will find the good way, that is, Christ, who brings about perfect purification of our souls. For we are justified through faith and rendered sharers in the divine nature by participation in the Holy Spirit. Yes, and that mighty prophet Isaiah himself proclaimed Christ to us by saying, "In that time there shall be a way, and it shall be called a holy way."[122] By "in that time," he means the time of the Only Begotten's *oikonomia* with the flesh. He has become for us a pure and holy way by which **[407]** those who walk on it will see the bright and beautiful city of the saints, the free Jerusalem, at the appointed time. Also the divinely inspired psalmist says to God the Father, "Teach me, O Lord, in your way."[123] He desires to be instructed by the laws of Christ, since he is not unaware that he will reach the city above through gospel instruction, journeying straight toward every blessing. It would not be difficult to bring forward many other testimonies from the prophets that show that Jesus is called the holy way. But I think there is no reason to belabor matters that are so clear and beneficial.

You know the way by which you should go to the mansions above, he says. By this, he means nothing other than: There are a great many resting places with God the Father, and I ascend before you to prepare a place whereby you may enter those regions with boldness. But realize, he says, that no one could go there through anyone else but me alone. Therefore, if anyone falls away from Christ's love—and pays attention to the impure babbling[124] and unclean, unnatural words of those who are devoted to slander, and classifies his ineffable and incomprehensible nature as being on the level of a slave, and numbers the free Word, begotten of the substance of the Father, with created beings, or grieves him in any other way—let them understand that they have lost the way that leads above and that they have been "deceived as to the wagon wheels of their own farm," as someone says. They will certainly undergo the penalty deserved by those who remain below. For this reason, the most wise Paul says that those who from deranged mind deny the way of life in Christ and return to the shadows of the law **[408]** have alienated themselves from Christ and have "fallen from grace" since they want to be justified by the law.[125] Just as those who depart from a well-traveled highway will surely sustain damage from their wandering, in exactly the same way, I think, those who reject the righteousness in Christ and who despise instruction in the gospel way of life will not see the city above or live with the saints. For Christ alone is the way that leads there.

14:5-6 Thomas said to him, "We do not know where you are going. How can we

[121]Jer 6:16.
[122]Is 35:8.
[123]Ps 27:11 (Ps 26:11 LXX).
[124]Cf 1 Tim 6:20.
[125]Gal 5:4.

know the way?" Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

Since Christ did not yet want to say openly to his disciples that he would go above and depart to the Father but still referred to the matter enigmatically with many hints, the disciple (Thomas) posed a question. He weaves together a kind of argument, all but forcing him, even against his will, to say where he will go and where the path of his journey stretches. We do not know, he says, where you are going, so how could we know the way? Christ evades the excessive curiosity of his disciple. He does not give the answer Thomas wanted, but he keeps the question in his mind and assigns it to a more fitting moment. Instead, he beneficially reveals what the disciple needed to know. I am the way, he says; I am the truth; I am the life.

Now I imagine that no one of sound mind would ever doubt that the Lord spoke the truth about himself. Yet I think we should examine his statement out of devotion to learning. Even though **[409]** the divinely inspired Scriptures call him light and wisdom and power and any number of other names, why does he employ a select few as being especially significant here, calling himself the way, the truth and the life? The meaning of this statement is deep and not very obvious, it seems to me. Yet we must not shrink from the attempt to discover it. So I will say what comes to mind and leave the task of thinking of better explanations to those who are practiced at keener interpretation.

There are three means by which we will reach the divine courts above and ascend to the church of the firstborn. I am talking about the practice of every kind of virtue, faith in orthodox doctrine and hope in life. Does that mean that there will be some other bestower or patron or cause or reason that will enable us to accomplish these things besides our Lord Jesus Christ? Of course not. Do not even think it. He has taught us things beyond the law. He has shown us the way that I suppose anyone could easily take to active virtue and a zealous and unhindered performance of those deeds that are patterned after Christ. Therefore, he is the "truth." He is the "way." That is, he is the true definition of the faith. He is the ruler and plumb line of an unerring understanding of God. We will wrap ourselves in the boast of a true faith if we believe in the true Son, that is, begotten of the substance of God the Father, not a bastard or a so-called son or a creature or handiwork. Whoever has accepted the Son as Son has surely also confessed the one from whom the Son is, and both knows and will accept God as Father. He is the "truth." He is the "life." No one else will restore to us the life we hope for, namely, a life of incorruption, blessedness and sanctification. He is the one who raises us up **[410]** and will bring us, who were dead because of the ancient curse, back to what we were in the beginning. In him and through him all that is excellent and beautiful has now appeared and will come to us in the future. Note also that his statement about these matters fits very well into the context of the passage. When the disciple was in doubt and said, "How can we know the way?" he showed him briefly that since they knew him to be the cause and bestower and prince of the blessings that would bring them to the world above, they had no further need to know "the way."

Since he adds to these words the statement, "No one comes to the Father except through me," come let us devote some of what we are about to say to this, examining the question of how one goes to the Father. We come to the Father in two ways. Either we become holy, at least as far as this is possible for human nature, so that we cling to the holy God—"You shall be holy," he says, "as I am holy"[126]—or we progress toward knowledge of the Father

[126]Lev 19:2.

through faith and contemplation, as "in a mirror and an enigma," as it is written.[127] But no one could ever be holy and reach the life of virtue without Christ leading every step of the way, nor could anyone ever cling to God the Father without the mediation of Christ. For he is the "mediator between God and humanity,"[128] and he joins humanity to God through himself and in himself. Since he sprang from the substance of God the Father, insofar as the Word is the Father's radiance and imprint, he is one with the Father, being completely in the Father and having the Father in him. But insofar as he became human like us, he joins himself with those on earth (but not with our sin) and has become a kind of borderland, containing in himself the elements that concur in unity and friendship.

[411] No one will "come to the Father," that is, will be made sharers of the divine nature, except through Christ alone. If he had not become a mediator by becoming human, our condition could not have progressed to such a point of blessedness. But even if some approach the Father through contemplation (I mean, by faith and reverent knowledge), they will still come through Christ our Savior. What I just said before, I will say again. The course of the argument is no different. Whoever receives the Son as a true Son will arrive at the knowledge of God the Father. After all, he could not be understood as a Son without also acknowledging the one who fathered him. Knowledge of the Father comes with the Son, and knowledge of the Son, in turn, comes with the Father. Therefore, the Lord speaks the truth when he says, "No one comes to the Father except through me," since the Son is the natural and essential image of God the Father. He is not, as some people think, molded in the form of the Father by external dignities, while being and being understood as something else in his essence.

14:7 "If you had known me, you would have known my Father also."

Perhaps someone might say and think that the Son is speaking of his own accord. That is not so. He would never have uttered anything pointless or superfluous, though he does sometimes repeat himself in a very instructive way because of the utter inability of people to follow what he is saying. But in the present case, his words are most profitable to us in connection with what he just said before. What Thomas asked, "Where will you go?" and, "How could we know the way, since we do not know where you are going?" he answered very appropriately, "I am the way, and the life, and the truth," and, "No one comes to the Father except through me."[129] By this he shows that whoever wants to know the way that leads to eternal life should surely strive **[412]** to know Christ. It was likely that some who engaged in Jewish rather than evangelical learning thought that the confession and knowledge of the one God of all was sufficient for right faith, and they were not interested in learning the doctrine about the holy and consubstantial Trinity. Consequently, Christ excludes those who think this way from the knowledge of God unless they should be willing to accept him. Access to God the Father comes through the Son. By contemplating the offspring, we will arrive analogously at the begetter. There is no possible doubt that whoever believes that the Son exists as Son (I mean from the essence of his begetter) will surely arrive at the knowledge of the Father as well.

Now according to the simple and obvious interpretation, that is what we should think he is saying. But if anyone wants to follow more subtle lines of thought in pursuing the investi-

[127] 1 Cor 13:12.
[128] 1 Tim 2:5.
[129] Jn 14:6.

gation of these matters, they will again find that the Son is telling the truth. The divine nature is completely inaccessible to all thought. To concern oneself with the nature of the creator of all is proof of the greatest folly. Yet it is somehow possible for us, in shadows and enigmas, to seek out knowledge by holding up the catalog of the attributes of the Son's nature as a kind of mirror to our mind. From his attributes and from the works he performed, both after he became human and before the incarnation, one may finally arrive by analogous reasoning at the contemplation of the one who begat him. Note, I ask of you, his glory and power. Look at his unhindered authority over all. What deed, tell me, comprehensible or incomprehensible, is he not found to have accomplished by his free will both before and after the incarnation? What is more, he who showed himself so great to us by his deeds says, "I and the Father are one. Whoever has seen me, has seen the [**413**] Father."[130] Let us proceed, then, in accordance with the meaning of the passage, from the image to the archetype and from the imprint to the one whose imprint he is. We do not say, as some of the heterodox are accustomed to say, that the Son is fashioned according to the Father's likeness by the addition of external attributes. Nor do we say, as some think in error, that he is the image of God the Father in the sense that he has his glory, power and wisdom but is of a different nature. This is their foolish babbling, delicately veiled nonsense, or rather blasphemy, conceived of to overturn and remove the consubstantiality of the Son in accordance with their unholy intentions that are hostile to God. On the contrary, he is a true Son begotten ineffably and incomprehensibly from the essence of God the Father. And as such, he is his image and imprint and radiance, bearing in his own nature the property of his Father's essence and the beauty of his natural attributes. We will not lose all sense like they do and degrade our own mind to such a depth of foolishness that we say he is not like God by nature, or deny that he is begotten from the essence of God the Father, or deny him the glory of God, or claim that any creature that is brought into existence from nothing could ever bear the unchangeable divine power and wisdom or ever be as the divine and ineffable nature of God the Father is understood to be. Otherwise, what difference would there be between creator and creature? What would be able to distinguish and separate what is made from the one who made it (I mean in terms of identity of essence)? If a creature in any way possesses glory and power and wisdom to the same degree as God the Father, I would be completely unable to say what the Father has that is superior to us or to creation, and I think the heretics would be at a loss as well. Therefore, [**414**] the Son is not conformed to likeness with the Father by the addition of external attributes. He is not like some picture, decorated with the mere colors falsely depicting the form of a king. No, he is the imprint and true image of the one who begat him, manifesting the Father's nature in his own natural attributes. That is why he says it is impossible for anyone to know the Father who does not first know him, that is, the Son.

"From now on you do know him and have seen him."

I think the construction and profound arrangement of this statement are worthy of wonder. After saying, "If you had known me, you would have known the Father," and seeming to rebuke the disciples for their ignorance of such necessary truths, he immediately heals them by saying, "From now on you do know him and have seen him." They were going to be leaders of churches everywhere, since the Savior told them, "Go and make

[130]Jn 10:30; 14:9.

disciples of all nations."[131] It is precisely for this reason, I think, that he first shows them a beneficial truth and makes the general statement, as it were, applicable to all, that anyone who knows the Son will surely also know God the Father from whom he comes. Then he goes on to offer beneficial testimony that his disciples possess this knowledge. He is not flattering them, though, since he would never utter anything that is not true. They knew him and acknowledged him. No one of sound mind can doubt that they knew and believed that the Lord is truly the Son of God. Otherwise, how did Nathanael the Israelite, when he heard the words, "Before Philip called you, I saw you under the fig tree," immediately produce a confession of faith, **[415]** saying, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God; you are the king of Israel"?[132] Or when the sea was miraculously and marvelously calmed, how is it that those in the ship worshiped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God"?[133] Will anyone claim that this statement was made by people who do not know that he is God and was begotten of God the Father? How could such a person avoid being caught in ignorance? In the district of Caesarea Philippi, the disciples were asked by Christ himself, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?"[134] Did they not first mention the opinions of others? Some, they say, think that he is Elijah or Jeremiah or one of the prophets.[135] But they do not shrink from saying clearly who they say he is. All of them speak through one, their leader (I mean Peter), confidently stating, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."[136] Therefore, when Christ says, "If you knew me, you would have known my Father as well," you should certainly not assume that this statement was directed at the disciples themselves. Rather, it is a general declaration laid down for all, even though it is offered in the presence of the holy apostles.

Take note, then, of the fact that we will find that they were not ignorant that he is God and the Son of God. However, when he called himself the "way" of God,[137] they did not understand very well that he seemed to be speaking enigmatically. On this point alone, the charge of their ignorance will stand. That is why he first rebuked them briefly for not being able to understand what was said to them indirectly; then he made a general statement applicable to all, teaching clearly that whoever is ignorant of the Son will lose the knowledge of the Father; then he rightly testifies to the knowledge of the disciples, who had already made confession of their faith, saying, "From now on you do know him and have seen him." And when he says "from now on," he certainly does not mean from that hour **[416]** or day when he made the statement to them about these matters. Rather, he says "from now on" to contrast the present and recent time of his advent (in which the knowledge of the Father has shone on people throughout the whole world through the Son) with the ancient and original period of time. That is why he says to God the Father in the book of Psalms, "Knowledge of you is made wonderful by me."[138] Now that we have seen the Son excelling in incomprehensible wonders and easily accomplishing whatever he wishes with God-befitting authority, we proceed from there to marvel at the knowledge of the Father, understanding it to be none other than the knowledge of the Son who came forth from him. "From now on," then, "you do know him and have seen him." We know who the Father is in the Son, as I just said, and not only do we know, but we behold and have seen. Knowledge refers to that mental contemplation that one

[131]Mt 28:19.
[132]Jn 1:49-50.
[133]Mt 14:33.
[134]Mt 16:13.
[135]Mt 16:14.
[136]Mt 16:14.
[137]Jn 14:6.
[138]Ps 139:6 (Ps 138:6 LXX).

might undertake, perhaps, concerning the divine and incomprehensible nature (I mean that nature that is above all and through all and in all). Seeing, however, refers to the fulfillment of our knowledge through miracles. We do not merely know that the Father is life by nature, and we do not have an understanding of that fact in mere thought alone; we have seen it carried out by the Son, who gives life to the dead and brings those who have decayed back into existence. We do not merely know that God the Father is life by nature and has all creation under his feet and exercises royal authority over everything he has made so that "all his works shake and tremble before him," as it is written;[139] we have seen this in the Son, when he commanded the sea and the winds and said with great authority, "Peace! Be still!"[140]

[417] Now when he is about to tell them, "You do not merely know the Father but you have seen him as well," he thinks it is necessary to preface that with "from now on." Why is that? The law declared to the Israelites through Moses, "The Lord your God, the Lord is one."[141] It did not present any instruction about the Son to the ancients, but it only took them out of polytheism and called them to worship the one God. Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the other hand, when he became a human being, made the Father known to us through himself with many signs and acts of power, and he revealed the one nature of divinity, which is understood and truly subsists in the holy Trinity. He does well, then, to say "from now on" because of the imperfect knowledge of those who live according to the law and who order their lives like they do. We must also note that when he says he is seen instead of the Father, he does not overturn the true and personal existence of God the Father, from whom he comes. He does not say that he is the Father, as far as reference to the person is concerned. But since he is of the same substance as the Father, he says that the one who begat him is seen in him—just like the son of an ordinary man, who wanted to indicate the nature of his father, might point to himself and say to whoever might want to learn this, "In me you have seen my father." Here again, however, God transcends the force of the example.

14:8 Philip said to him, "Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied."

Philip is eager to learn, but he is not very sharp in his understanding of what is applicable when it comes to seeing God. Otherwise, he never would have thought that it was possible to see the divine nature with the eyes of the body, despite the fact that God clearly says, "No one will see my face and live."[142] Even though **[418]** he did on occasion appear to the saints, as the divinely inspired Scripture says, I do not think anyone should suppose that the divine nature was manifested as it is in itself. Rather, it molded itself into an outward appearance that was suitable for the particular occasion. For example, the prophets saw him in different ways, and their description of God varies. Isaiah saw him one way, and Ezekiel saw him in a different way, not resembling the wonder in Isaiah. Philip, then, should have understood that it was completely impossible to be able to see the unincarnate divine essence by means of the flesh. It was not very wise, when the image and exact imprint of God the Father was present before him, to seek to progress to the archetype itself, as though it were not present and manifested in an appropriate manner. The contemplation of Christ is fully sufficient to present the essence of God the Father, since he weaves together beautifully

[139] 1 Esdr 4:36.
[140] Mk 4:39.
[141] Deut 6:4.
[142] Ex 33:20.

and precisely the lovely splendor of the royal essence from which he came. "For the tree is known by its fruit," as the Savior himself says.[143] Once one understands that the contemplation of the Son is sufficient to represent to us in perfect fullness the nature of both him and his begetter, the disciple's statement perhaps might seem excessive. And yet it certainly will not be excluded from those things that deserve the highest praise. I think we must highly admire him for saying, "Show us the Father, and we will be satisfied." It is as though he said, We would acknowledge that we were enjoying every pleasure and that there would be nothing left for us to seek in order to be blessed if we ourselves were deemed worthy of the longed-for sight of God the Father. Whoever considers seeing the Father to be more important than every blessing and everything that promises to bring happiness—how could that person not be acknowledged as worthy of all admiration? Therefore, this is how we should understand this passage, in my view, **[419]** according to the well-worn and simpler view of the many.

However, if we must look at a more involved interpretation and perhaps speak of hidden meanings, we will consider that Philip thought and said something like the following. The leaders of the Jews were consumed with the Savior's miracles, and so were the scribes and Pharisees. They were struck to the heart by his immeasurable proofs of divine power, as if by stones. They were torn apart by envy, and they knew that they were in no way powerful enough to do anything like this themselves, or to prevent him from doing miracles. Therefore, they disparaged his miraculous deeds and made light of his glory with deceitful words. They ran up and down through the whole territory of Judea and Jerusalem itself. At one time they said he performed signs by Beelzeboul.[144] At another, in the fury of their uncontrollable madness, they said he had a demon and that he did not know what he was talking about. They rebuked the crowds, saying, "He has a demon and is out of his mind. Why listen to him?"[145] Moreover, [there was another] unbearable [plan] they devised [to ruin] his reputation.[146] What that was, I must now explain.

They tried to persuade the people, as we have just shown, not to listen to the word of our Savior but to depart from him as one teaching contrary to the law and to run away from him as far as possible, devoting themselves instead to the precepts of Moses. And why? They said that the great Moses brought the people of old out "to meet God," as it is written,[147] and he stood on Mount Sinai and showed them God on the mountain and prepared them to hear his words and gave them absolutely clear assurances that God was the one decreeing the laws. Christ, on the other hand, did none of these things. And that this strategy was common among them, you may learn from the following. You can see them saying to the man born blind, whom **[420]** the Savior healed by his indescribable power, "You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from."[148] Those who were employing Jewish doctrine in their argumentation thought that their case was difficult to oppose and not easy for the many to refute. Indeed, it is likely that they confused and ensnared many people with it. Philip, thinking that all the opposition of the Jews would be stopped if Christ himself would show the Father to those who believe in him,

[143]Mt 12:33.

[144]Lk 11:15.

[145]Jn 10:20.

[146]There is a lacuna in the text at this point. The words in brackets are speculative.

[147]Ex 19:17.

[148]Jn 9:28-29.

approaches him and says, "Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied." You should understand him to be saying, All things that lead to faith, O Lord, are accomplished by your authority. With a myriad of miracles one could put to shame the pure babbling of the Jews. But we will lack nothing if you yourself show us God the Father. That will be sufficient for your disciples so they can be well armed with arguments against those who raise these objections. If we apply some interpretation like this to the passage, I do not think we will miss the mark of a fitting explanation. After all, Philip himself invites us to think this when he says, "we will be satisfied" to see God the Father, as if this alone were lacking to the believers. The Savior himself also hints at this when he says in what follows, "The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own; but the Father who dwells in me does his works."[149] How we should interpret this statement will be explained not at present but in a more suitable neighboring location. **[421]**

14:9 Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and you still do not know me? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father."

Without hesitation he reveals the ignorance of the disciple. Concepts that are more difficult to understand (I mean that require more subtle examination to comprehend them in our mind) will surely be grasped by and become clear to those who are eager to learn—maybe not in the short term, but at least in the long term. Those whose minds are not hardened and whose knowledge is unobstructed should apply themselves quite easily to such learning. What, then, O Philip, he says, has prevented you from reaching perfect knowledge of me? Tell me. Although a long enough time has elapsed in which I was with you for you to learn what you needed to learn, still you are in doubt, or rather you are caught in ignorance, concerning who I am by nature and where I come from, despite the fact that I performed miracles before you. How did you not know, he says, that whoever has seen me has seen the Father? You suppose that the Jews of old saw the divine nature on Mount Sinai and that they heard it speaking to them when it decreed the laws that governed their conduct, but you have not yet realized that you have seen the Father through me and in me. For "whoever has seen me has seen the Father." And I do not think it will take too many words to show my hearers that Christ is not referring to fleshly seeing. No one who has a brain would say that the nature of God is subject to fleshly seeing, nor could anyone see with the eyes of the flesh what can barely be grasped as in a mirror, since we see in an enigma.[150] I think that whoever boasts in such great knowledge actually thinks very little of God.

[422] But we will also say this to the enemies of the truth, who sharpen their tongues against us,[151] or rather against the very substance of the Only Begotten. If the Son is not of the very substance of God the Father so that he is, in a begotten way, the same thing the Father is, namely, true God by nature; and if he is adorned merely with an outward form and shines with imported glory and not with his own natural attributes, and in that sense represents the Father in himself and is the unchangeable image of God; then first of all, he would not be a Son by nature or a true offspring but a creature like us or like the other creatures. Once we have accepted this and have believed it to be so, then we will surely be right in saying that the Father would not be a father in his activities or his nature but only in his will and intention, just as he is called the Father of us as well. What then

[149]Jn 14:10.

[150]1 Cor 13:12.

[151]Literally "who have a wide tongue against us."

follows from this? We will still acknowledge that a trinity arises in consequence of this, but we will no longer believe in the holy Trinity, but rather in three who do not subsist in each other essentially, but each of the names recedes, as it were, into the individual character of his own nature, each completely cut off from the other. (The content of this view forces us to speak rather coarsely about these matters.) If we grant that this is true and say that it is so and understand the Son to be completely foreign to the substance of God the Father, how could he not be lying when he says, "Whoever has seen me has seen the Father"? Since the Father is God by nature, how could the Son (who is not God by nature according to their view) reveal the Father in himself? How could we see the uncreated in a creature? How could anyone see the one who exists forever in one who once did not exist (since that is what being created implies)?

Let not **[423]** any of these blasphemers tell me, in their sophistical perversion of the force of the truth, that he is the image of the Father in the sense that he has the glory of God the Father and his power and wisdom and goodness and almighty power to bring what once did not exist into existence. First let them show whether he shows himself to be God by nature, so identical that there is nothing to mar the complete and utter likeness of the image to the archetype. And if they are at a loss and unwilling to show this, we will then ask them to tell us what explanation would allow him, even though he is not by nature God according to their indecent view, to be able to perform the works of the divine nature. This is what it means to bear the image of the Father. If the Son does not have sufficient power on his own to do this but borrows it from the Father and is supplied by him with wisdom and strength so that he may be able to carry out acts that we would describe as fitting for the nature of the Father alone, then he will be falsifying the image and likeness. But if we refuse to grant that he, being as we just described him, is lying, and we agree that he is telling the truth, then we will be caught doing damage to the glory of God the Father. I will explain how. Either we must say that he falsifies the image of God the Father, since he does not have on his own the strength sufficient for his works but is supplied with this by someone else (which is not the case with the archetype); or if he is telling the truth when he says that the Father is seen in him, and there is nothing at all that changes or breaks or falsifies the complete similarity, then we must admit even against our will that the Father himself also has his power as an import from someone else, since that is how he wanted to represent himself to us in the image of his nature and glory.

Do you not see, then, one might say to them, **[424]** where your view will lead, once it departs from the straight path, and into what kind of pit it will take those who adhere to those ideas? But surely it is possible, they say, for the Son, even though he is a creature, to carry out the works of his nature, thus glorifying God the Father. What is more manifestly irreverent than this suggestion? There is no longer anything greater or superior in God than in a creature, if we clothe the creature with the glory and power of the divinity. Let no one from an utterly deranged mind imagine that they are thinking or saying anything worthy or great about the Son when they say that he is a creature but not as one of the creatures.[152] Let them realize that they are doing no small damage to the glory of the Son. The question is not whether he has a nature that excels the other creatures but whether he is originate at all. How could he avoid being a creature, if he is the fairest of all the creatures? After damag-

[152]Cf. "The Confession of the Arians, Addressed to Alexander of Alexandria," in *Christology of the Later Fathers*, ed. Edward R. Hardy, The Library of Christian Classics: Ichthus Edition (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1954), 333.

ing the glory of the Son by saying that he is an originate being, why do they vainly add, as if it were some kind of medicine, that he is on the highest possible level? Therefore, we will insult the substance of God the Father if we clothe the Son with the ability to accomplish these things, even though he himself happens to be originate according to their ignorant and foolish argument. We will not put up with them saying that the Son performs the works of the divine nature, even though he is a creature by nature, thus to glorify God the Father. If they can prove this from the divine Scripture, let them bring forward whatever passages they wish and let them observe the statements of the holy writers in all sincerity. But if these are inventions of their own mind and if they themselves have manufactured the arguments about this matter, then we will salute them with the words, "Woe to those who prophesy from their own heart!"[153] We will grant that the Father always desires what he knows will maintain the integrity of his divine glory and preserve the orthodoxy of the doctrine about him.

So we will now bid farewell to the ignorance of the heretics and move on to the truth about him, **[425]** believing that the Son was truly begotten of the substance of God the Father and that he is God from God by nature. As the imprint and likeness of God the Father, he is telling the truth when he says, "Whoever has seen me has seen the Father." It is possible for you, Philip, he is saying, to see the Father's nature in me, and from what I am to see my begetter. I have appeared to be and I am in truth the identical imprint and perfect image of his substance, engraving the entire nature of God the Father in myself. What other way of seeing God would you seek, at least if you can think reasonably?[154] What other sighting, tell me, are you looking for? Do you think that a greater and more precise vision was given to the ancients when I descended in the form of fire on Mount Sinai? That is what the Jews usually take great pride in.

This, we may suppose, is the meaning of Christ's answer. Now I think we must untiringly explain that the manifestation contained in the miracles of Christ our Savior is a better guide to the knowledge of God than the manifestation on Mount Sinai. Notice that Philip, when the image of truth was before him, necessarily refrained from asking for the other kind of vision of God the Father, which was also given to the ancients at Mount Sinai. For the Lord descended there in the form of fire, as it is written,[155] while the Israelites were looking on. But no one, I think, could ever proceed from this to a true understanding about God or leap from this to a fitting conception about the divine nature. After all, how could we ever get from fire (an image) to the archetype (God the Father)? God is good by nature, and on top of that **[426]** he is the creator, who calls into being what once did not exist and holds all things in existence and gives life. He is wisdom and power. He is kind, compassionate and merciful. Absolutely none of these qualities belong to fire. No one with any sense would think that fire is kind and loving. Nor would any sober person say that it is a wise and life-giving creative force. How then, tell me, could anyone put together an understanding of the true divine nature from fire? Or how could one behold in a mirror and an enigma any of its natural properties?

What then, one may say, was the consideration or reason that persuaded God to reveal himself with fire on Mount Sinai? We will answer that, at that moment above all others, the Israelites were beginning their education in godliness. They were going to implement the law, which was about to be enacted, as a

[153]Ezek 13:3.

[154]Here Cyril seems to be commenting on the last part of Jn 14:9, "How can you say, 'Show us the Father'?"

[155]Ex 19:18.

rule, as it were, for their lives. Therefore, God appeared to them at that time as a fearful punisher so that the transgressors might be able to understand that they were headed for fire. That is why the great Moses addressed the Israelites, saying, "Our God is a consuming fire."[156] We should surely not claim that so wise a man was explaining the nature of God when he compared it with fire. Rather he used this term for God because God, out of his extreme hatred of wickedness, does not hesitate to devour and consume those who despise him like an all-consuming fire. Therefore, it is not because of what he is by nature that God is made known through fire. But he took it upon himself to be called this and to appear as fire at that time for the benefit of the hearers.

Let us move on, then, to the true and most precise vision of God, that is, the Son. We will see him to be the image of the one who begat him if we fix the eye of our mind on his extraordinary attributes. God the Father is good by nature, **[427]** and we will find that the Son is like this as well. How could he not be good, since he endured such humiliation for us and came "into the world to save sinners"[157] and laid down his life for us? Similarly, the Father is powerful, and so is the Son. What could be more powerful than one who commands the elements themselves, who rebukes the sea and the winds, who transforms the nature of substances however he wishes, who commands the leper to be clean and who gives sight to the blind with God-befitting authority? The Father is life by nature. The Son, in turn, is also life. He gives life to those who have undergone decay, and he conquers the power of death, thereby raising the dead to life. With good reason, then, he says to Philip, "Whoever has seen me has seen the Father." In me and from me, he says, you can gaze intently at him who begat me. So what other way of seeing God are you looking for, when you have received a better way than that given to the ancients and you possess the truest image, that is, me?

14:10 "Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me?"

Since I depict the nature of my begetter in myself, Philip, he is saying, I am the image of his substance. I am patterned after him not, as one might suppose, with external glories, and neither am I illustrious with foreign and imported excellences. Rather I bear the attributes of my begetter in my own nature, and whatever he is, I am truly the same (with respect to the identity of substance, I mean). You will surely object to this, since you do not realize that I am in the Father, and the Father, in turn, is in me. Yet the force of my words will finally constrain you, even against your will, to agree with this. **[428]** Therefore, whatever words I say surely belong to the Father, and whatever works I do the Father also does. Christ says these things not as one citing the words of someone else, not speaking in the rank and position of a prophet, delivering a message from the Father above. They were not speaking their own words at all but the words of God, who gave them by inspiration. Again, he ascribes to his Father the performance of the miracles, not implying that he did miracles with an imported power, like those who say, Do not stare at us, as though we have healed the sick man "by our power or piety."[158] The saints did not use their own power to perform miracles but God's. They are ministers and servants of God's word and activities. Since the Son, on the other hand, is of the same substance as the Father, differing from him in no way, he says that his words are the words of the Father, since the Father would use no other

[156]Heb 12:29; Deut 4:24.
[157]1 Tim 1:15.
[158]Acts 3:12.

words than the Son does. You can also see this in the magnificence of his works. Since the Father, by his nature and power, does nothing other than what the Son knows and does, he says that the works are the Father's. Think of him as making this more explicit statement: I am in every way like him who begat me. I am the image of his essence, not merely adorned with an outward appearance and with external glories, but containing the entire Father in myself, on account of the identity of essence.

"The words that I say I do not speak on my own; but the Father who remains in me is the one who does the works."

If the Father were to say anything to you, he is saying, he would not use any other words than the ones I am using now. **[429]** I have such likeness to him in essence that my words are his, and whatever I do is believed to be his accomplishment. Remaining in me because of the identity of essence, he "does the works." And since one divine nature is understood to be in the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, every word from the Father is surely through the Son and in the Spirit. And every work or miracle is through the Son and in the Spirit as well. It is carried out, however, as from the Father. The Son is not external to the essence of the one who begat him, and neither is the Holy Spirit, but since the Only Begotten is in him and he has his Father in himself, he says that the Father does the works. The nature of the Father is active, and it shines out beautifully in the Son.

Now one might say that there is another meaning in addition to this that finds a legitimate starting point in the *oikonomia* with the flesh. "I do not speak on my own," he says, meaning that he does not speak apart from or out of harmony with God the Father. Since he appeared to those who saw him in human form, he ascribes his words to the nature of the divinity in the person of the Father. He does this with his works as well. He is basically saying, Do not let this human form deprive me of the understanding of me that is due and proper. Do not assume that my words are those of a mere human being or of someone like you. Rather, they are truly divine and fitting for God the Father himself, just as I am. He "who remains in me" does them. I am in him, and he is in me. Do not believe, he is saying, that anything great or supernatural was given to the ancients when they saw God in the form of fire or heard his voice speaking to them. You are the ones who have truly seen the Father through me and in me. When I appeared looking like you, I, who am God by nature, "came visibly," as the psalmist says.[159] You should realize that when you hear my words, you hear the words of the Father. You have become spectators of both his works and his power. **[430]** He speaks through me as through his own Word, and he accomplishes and performs marvelous deeds through me as through his own power.

And I suppose that no explanation could sever the Word and power of the Father's essence from the essence itself. Everyone would agree without a doubt that the Word and power exist and are rooted in that essence by nature—everyone except those whose minds have been stricken. **[431]**

Chapter One

Because of the identity of nature, the Son is in the Father and the Father, in turn, is in the Son.

14:11 "Believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me."

He now states plainly, or rather commands, that we should think in no other way than the word of truth would desire. He is of the same substance as his begetter, with nothing at all separating them or in any way cutting off one

[159] Ps 50:2 (Ps 49:2 LXX).

into a different nature than the other. He is one with him so that the nature of the Son is revealed in the essence of the Father, and the essence of God the Father is seen and shows forth in the essence of his offspring, as anyone of course could see in our case as well. After all, we are not different by nature from our own offspring, nor are we divided into different natures, even though we are distinguished by having separate bodies. Therefore, whoever sees the son begotten of Abraham sees the blessed Abraham himself. Now in the case of human beings, there is a sharp distinction since each person contracts, so to speak, and withdraws as they are formed into their own personal existence and appearance. They are not implanted physically in the other, even though the definition of their substance is obviously common to all of them. In the case of him who is God by nature, however, you should not understand it this way. In terms of his person, **[432]** the Father is the Father, not the Son; likewise, the one who is from him is the Son, not the Father; and the Spirit is personally the Spirit. However, since the holy Trinity is united and joined together in one nature of divinity, we have one God. No one would grant, for example, that there is a total separation of each of the aforementioned from the others, and neither will they completely withdraw into a separate existence. Rather, we believe that each one is personally exactly what we have named him to be. We hold that the Son is from the Father (that is, from his essence) and that he proceeds ineffably from him and remains in him. And it is the same way with the Holy Spirit. He truly is from God by nature. He is not divided in any way from his essence but proceeds from him and remains in him always. The Spirit is also supplied to the saints through Christ, since all things come through the Son and in the Spirit. The wisdom of the holy fathers has taught us this correct and true doctrine, and we have been taught to speak and think this way through the divine Scriptures themselves. And the Lord encourages us to progress with a perfectly correct understanding to this unimpeachable faith when he says, "Believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me."

"But if you do not, then believe because of the works themselves."

He explicitly states in these words that he would never have performed or accomplished works fitting for the divine nature alone if he were not essentially of that nature. Notice how solid and true his basis for saying this is. He does not claim credence so much for his words (although he does not know how to lie) as for his actions. I will explain why. It is not difficult for a raving, deranged man, for example, to use God-befitting words and statements and to make reckless claims. **[433]** But who could ever display God-befitting power to perform a God-befitting work? To what creature will the Father grant his own glory? Will we not say that the glory of God consists of the ability to do everything and to have almighty power, and that it applies to no one else, at least to no one numbered among the creatures? Given this, Christ wants to demonstrate the truth about himself by necessary and irrefutable proofs. So he commands them to believe from the works themselves that he is in the Father and he, in turn, has the Father in himself, that is, he bears the nature of the Father in his own being as a genuine offspring, as a true fruit, as a Son who has come from the Father by nature.

Although the church of Christ, taking great pride in the orthodoxy of its teaching, holds this view of the Only Begotten, the godless heretics attempt to seduce to a different view those who follow and adhere to their pernicious teachings. Those wretches love contention. They rail against Christ and consider not how to provoke each other to godliness[160] but how each one may seem more godless than the

[160]Heb 10:24.

others and how they may utter statements that are more inappropriate than the rest. They drink the wine of Sodom and gather the bitter grapes of Gomorrah,[161] since they do not get their ideas about him from the divine Spirit or from the revelation of the Father but from the head of the dragon.[162] Therefore, they have no sound thoughts, but they say things that make the souls of their hearers wretched and bring them down to Hades and the pit below. They even dare to put these things in books and thus erect an immortal monument to their wickedness. Now it ought to have been sufficient for us to make comments on this passage aimed at benefiting whoever came upon them, [**434**] presenting the correct understanding of the Son and making no mention of the views of the heretics. But since it is not at all improbable that some who have a simpler mind might encounter their wretched teachings and be carried away by them, I thought it was necessary to use the doctrines of the truth to fend off the harm caused by their nonsense and to completely refute the slanders with which they want to attack the Son, or rather, the entire divine nature, since that is a truer way of putting it.

I happened upon a pamphlet of the opponents.[163] And when I looked into what they say about this passage, I found this statement after some other comments: "Since the Son is essentially encompassed by the Father, he has the Father in himself, who utters the words and performs the signs. He explains this when he says, 'The words that I say I do not speak on my own; but the Father who remains in me is the one who does the works.'"[164]

These are the exact words of their hairsplitting. Since I must offer a counterargument to their statement that can prove their thinking to be false, I say this: I have no idea what in the world it means or what it signifies to say that the Son is essentially encompassed by the Father (since I must speak the truth), so great is the obscurity of the expression. The meaning blushes, as it were, and retreats into obscurity, lacking the confidence to express itself. Just as "those who do evil hate the light and do not come into the light, so that their deeds may not be exposed," as the Savior says;[165] so also every statement that communicates evil loves to proceed with shadowy concepts and will not come into the light of clear expression, so that the cheapness of its inherent unsoundness may not be exposed.

What then does it mean to say that the Son is essentially encompassed by the Father? I will go through every possible interpretation by which [**435**] I may be able to tease out the meaning of such an obscure expression that is perhaps ashamed to be understood lest it reveal the evil intentions of those who gave birth to it. If the statement is supposed to mean that the Son is seen in the essence of the Father, since he is of the same substance as the Father, and he has the Father in himself, who shines brilliantly in the nature of his offspring, we too will agree with this meaning of the statement, though the term *encompass* does no small damage when it is applied to the Son. But if it does not mean this—and surely it does not, since the fact that the Son was begotten of the substance of the Father would never be accepted by one who has vomited up such blasphemy and who asserts that the nature of the Son is surrounded by that of the Father like some finite body—how could they not be caught in explicit blasphemy and shown to be full of the ultimate madness? Even though they say that the Son is God, they irrationally

[161]Cf. Deut 32:32.

[162]Cf. Ps 74:13 (Ps 73:13 LXX).

[163]This pamphlet seems to have been authored by Theodore of Heraclea in opposition to Marcellus of Ancyra. See Matthew Crawford, "The Triumph of Pro-Nicene Theology Over Anti-Monarchian Exegesis: Cyril of Alexandria and Theodore of Heraclea on John 14.10-11," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 21, no. 4 (Winter, 2013): 537-567.

[164]Jn 14:10.

[165]Jn 3:20.

try to attach physical properties to him. After all, being divided by a boundary and by a spatial measurement that starts from some beginning and ends at its limit—this surely indicates existence in space and quality and form and shape. How then are these not physical properties? How does this claim not conceive of him who is above us as being with us and like us? How is he not the brother of the rest of creation, having nothing more than it, as far as being finite is concerned? And if this is so, at least according to the ignorant view of the opponents, why did he vainly reproach us with the words, "You are from below; I am from above"; and again, "You are of this world; I am not of this world"?[166] Now when he says that he is from above, he does not simply mean that he is from heaven. Otherwise, what superiority would he have to the holy angels, since we will find them too to be from above, if we take the meaning in a local sense? [**436**] He means that he is the offspring of the substance that is above and is superior to all things. How then does he turn out to be telling the truth if he has physical properties in common with the rest of creation, and he is encompassed by the Father along with those things that were brought into being from nonexistence? Of course, we will grant that nothing lies outside the Father. The divinely inspired psalmist surely speaks the truth and declares hidden mysteries in the Spirit when he says that the Son is absent from no place at all, thereby attesting his incorporeal and unlimited nature and the fact that, as God, he is not confined to a place. "Where can I go," he says, "from your Spirit, and where can I flee from your presence? If I go up into heaven, you are there. If I go down into Hades, you are there. If I take up my wings in the morning and I go to the ends of the sea, even there your hand will lead me, and your right hand will hold me."[167] These people recklessly oppose their own opinion to the words of the Spirit when they subject the Only Begotten to a boundary and to circumscription, although they ought to accept cogent and profitable reasoning on this matter. If he has filled the heavens and the ends of the earth, that is, the regions that lead to Hades, how is it not utterly unreasonable to apply the term *encompass* to him without reflecting on the fact that if his presence, that is, the Spirit (since the psalmist refers to the Spirit as the presence of the Son) fills all things, he could not be "encompassed" by anything, not even God the Father? It is no less outrageous to circumscribe what is incorporeal than to impose measure on what is not finite. The statement that he is essentially encompassed by the Father—what else does this mean than that he has a finite substance, just like each one of the beings created by him? [**437**] We will truly and without danger grant that they are encompassed, since they are bodies, though not perhaps like ours.

I think we need to consider the following as well. If we must say that that which is encompassed by something is definitely located inside that which is said to encompass it, how could it not follow without a doubt that we should understand what is encompassed to be inferior to that which encompasses it, and that we should say that it is finite, enclosed, as it were, by being encompassed by what is superior? What then, my good friend, will you say to this? Here we have Christ presenting himself as the image of God the Father and explicitly stating, "Whoever has seen me has seen the Father,"[168] and then he immediately adds, "I am in the Father and the Father is in me."[169] If this means, as you claim, "Even though I am the imprint and image of him who begat me, I

[166]Jn 8:23.

[167]Ps 139:7-10 (Ps 138:7-10 LXX).

[168]Jn 14:9.

[169]Jn 14:10.

am essentially encompassed by him," how could he not want us all without a doubt to hold such opinions about the Father as we hold about him? So the Father must be finite, since he is in the Son. Then the heretic will have to figure out which of them is greater, since it is not lawful for me to think or speak about that. The Son cannot be an image of the Father in one respect but not another. If he possesses anything at all that alters or interferes with the complete likeness, he would be a partial, not a complete, image. But where could you show the Holy Scripture saying this? We will certainly not be persuaded by your words to reject the orthodoxy of the holy doctrines. I am surprised that they did not shrink back in terror from going on to say this: Just as Paul had Christ speaking and working miracles in him,[170] in the same way the Son had the Father speaking and performing signs in him. That is why he says, "Believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me. But if not, believe on account of the works themselves." After this, who will still **[438]** use the name *Christian* to address someone who holds such a view and thinks such thoughts about Christ? Look! Look! He says quite clearly that the Son is no longer truly God. He recklessly clothes him with the limitations that belong to creatures and proclaims him to be a sort of God-bearer and a participant in God, but not God begotten from God. His intention throughout, to put it briefly, is to separate him completely, in every way and respect, from the essence of God the Father and to cut him off altogether from the natural and essential relationship that he has with God his Father.

What could be more stupendous than this? How could one refrain from shedding uncontrollable tears out of love for one so abandoned to ungodliness, as if they were already dead and lost? One may very aptly say, "Who will give water to my head and a fountain of tears to my eyes, and I will weep for this people day and night?"[171] Indeed, it would be impossible to hold back the tears for those who have chosen to think such things. However, since I think we must refute their slanders by means of the doctrines of the truth for the sake of the simple, come let us answer them that "we have been very zealous for the Lord."[172] The divinely inspired Paul, as you know, sir, and any other of the saints had Christ dwelling in their mind by the Holy Spirit and performed the deeds that God willed and seemed to be workers of miracles. It is an established fact, therefore, and one that you would grant to be true that since they were human in nature and different in essence from the Holy Spirit of Christ who dwelt in them, they were God-fearers and they were glorious through the grace given to them by Christ. And you will surely agree with us that they once lacked this grace, but they were called to it when it seemed good to God, **[439]** who directs all things well. Therefore, it was not impossible that the blessed Paul (or any of those like him) could by some foul act or poorly done deed give offense to God and be shown bereft of the grace that was given to him. He would then fall back down again into the humiliation from which he had arisen. After all, that which is completely external and imported can easily be rejected and can be taken away as readily as it was given.

Now then, my good sir, your argument will be turned against you: if, according to your ignorant and godless assumption, just as Christ was speaking and working wonders in Paul, one should grant that the Father was doing the same in the Son, how could there be any doubt that he must in no sense be God by nature, but he must be something other than the Father who dwells in him, who is God in truth? After all, that is how Christ was in

[170] 2 Cor 13:3.

[171] Jer 9:1.

[172] 1 Kings 19:10.

Paul. Therefore, the Only Begotten is an instrument or some kind of vessel fitted for his glory, and there will be no difference between him and a flute or lyre, which makes the sound that happens to be blown into it or called forth from it into rhythmic melody by plucking. He will be accepted as an assistant to the Father in performing miracles, as one might conceive of an axe or saw in the hand of a skilled carpenter. What is more irrational than this? If matters are as they say concerning his nature, he will be completely foreign to God the Father, whereas in our opinion he is by nature God and none other than God. But if the Son is separated from the substance of God the Father, at least when it comes to being God by nature, surely we are correct in saying that he is to be ranked with creation and numbered with those things that have been made and regarded as an instrument. The Son who sits in council with God the Father now appears as our servant rather than our Lord and, more to the point, he is not a true Son. No one would understand and receive someone as a son who was placed in the category of an instrument. The Father, it would appear, has begotten an instrument [**440**] for his skill and wisdom, and it is something other than what he is. How could that be possible? How is it not utterly bizarre to think such a thing? If you do not abandon your opinion that the Son is an instrument and a servant and keep refusing to confess him as a true offspring and denying his ineffable generation (from the substance of God the Father, I mean), you will impugn the glory of his Father as well. The Father will no longer be a true father. After all, if he did not beget from himself at all, whose natural father would he be? And then the holy Trinity would have a completely false name, since the Father is not truly a father, and the Son is not a son by nature. Blasphemy against the Spirit would then follow by analogous reasoning.

In that case, we have been deceived, and our faith is a falsehood. The Holy Scripture is lying when it calls God Father. And if the Son is not God by nature, on the grounds that he is not begotten of God the Father, then we are in error, and along with those on earth, the city above and the purest multitude of the holy angels are in error too, who join us in worshiping and glorifying God by nature and who are also convinced (I do not know how) that they should praise a God-bearing vessel and one of the creatures, at least according to the heretics' folly. And if the Father should ever will to withdraw from his relationship with and indwelling of the Son, the Son would be no different from those who have fallen from their original condition, having nothing of his own and no longer bearing his begetter in his nature. He would be completely like us, strengthened only by divine grace and honored with the title of sonship along with us. Why then, tell me, does he not acknowledge his natural relationship with us? Why is it that "we perish forever, and he is enthroned forever"?[173] Why are we servants, [**441**] while he is the Lord? Even though we are called sons of God, nonetheless we acknowledge our own nature, and so we do not bring disgrace on that glory. Now the ignorant think that he is like us and is in no way superior to the creatures in that he is not by nature God. Well, if that is so, why, tell me, does he not acknowledge his servitude along with us? Instead he clothes himself with honor and glory that is fitting to and belongs properly to the divine nature. He says to the holy disciples, "You call me teacher and Lord—and you are right, for that is what I am."[174] This is our Savior's statement. But these fine and noble expositors of doctrines opposed to him praise him for saying and insisting that he is truly called Lord, but they exclude him from natural lordship by refusing to confess that he is God from God by nature. Nevertheless, they are not bold enough to

[173]Bar 3:3.
[174]Jn 13:13.

bring the most shameful accusations against him that their blasphemy implies.

Through the following, you will learn that he does not wish be classified as a slave or numbered in the catalog of created beings; rather, he focuses on the freedom he has by nature even when he has come to be in the form of a slave. He arrived at Capernaum, as we read in the Gospels, and the collectors of the temple tax according to the law came to Peter and said, "Does not your teacher pay the half-shekel?"[175] And when Christ heard of this, it is right that we should examine the question he asked Peter: "The kings of the earth—from whom do they collect toll or tribute? From their sons or from others?"[176] Peter wisely and sensibly acknowledged that it is foreigners to the kingdom, in terms of race and kinship as it is reckoned by us, who are subject to ordinances and taxation. Then Christ immediately brought forward the testimony that he truly has a God-befitting nature by adding, "Then **[442]** the sons are free."[177] Now if he were a fellow slave and not a true Son begotten of the substance of the Father, having no natural relationship to his parent, why is everyone else subject to tax on the grounds that they are foreign in nature to the one who is owed tribute and that they have the rank of servants, while he has claimed freedom for himself alone? It is by a loose use of terms that properties that truly and strictly speaking belong only to the divine nature are ascribed to us. He, on the other hand, has these properties in truth. So if one were to examine carefully the nature of created beings, one would surely see that the name and condition of slavery is most fitting for that nature. But when some of us are honored with the glory of freedom, we possess, by loose use of terms, something that belongs only to God.

And I would also like to ask them this question: Will they say that Paul was a God-bearer since Christ dwelt in him through his own Spirit? Or will they be silly enough to deny this? If they say that he is not truly a God-bearer, that should be enough to persuade people to reject their nonsense for all time and to hate them utterly as people who do not hesitate to make any absurd claim. On the other hand, if they flee this answer and turn to the necessity of speaking the truth and agree that he is truly a God-bearer because Christ dwells in him, how will they not be caught in utter blasphemy when they say that the Son is foreign to the substance of God the Father? After all, Paul is no God-bearer if the Son is not God by nature. But sometimes they blush and say—since they are characterized by cunning and perverse argumentation—that the Son is truly God, but he is not begotten of God by nature. And there is no doubt that everyone would cry out against them on this point as well. **[443]** How could he be God if he is not begotten of God by nature? But we do say the Son is God by nature, you reply. How then could one who is God by nature be a God-bearer or a participant in God? No one could ever participate in himself. To what end will God dwell in God, as one in another? If the recipient is by nature the same as what the indweller is understood to be, what need would there be for participation? If the Son dwelt in Paul the same way the Father dwelt in the Son, how will the Son not be a God-bearer like Paul, since he no longer has his existence as God by nature because he needs God, who is superior, to dwell in him. Next, this noble friend of ours thinks up even more clever devices, and with many proofs (as he imagines them) he tries to babble his way through his argument. I think it is worthwhile to go through all of his words and to investigate his impious intentions so that he may clearly be convicted of numbering the Only Begotten with created beings. That wretched man has

[175]Mt 17:24.
[176]Mt 17:25.
[177]Mt 17:26.

buried his impiety toward Christ under a heap of cleverly devised deceptions. He agrees that he is God, but he excludes him from true and natural divinity. And he thinks that somehow he can escape the notice of people who are looking for the real truth!

Accordingly, he writes, "Just as we are said to be in him, but we maintain our hypostasis unmixed with him, in the same way the Son is in the Father but has a substance distinct from the Uncreated One."[178]

Oh the audacity! What a clever statement, full of foolishness, or rather of all perversity and madness! "Claiming to be wise, they really became fools."[179] By thinking such things about the Only Begotten, "they denied the Lord who bought them," as it is written.[180] If they say that the Word of God is a human being and one just like us, there is nothing to prevent them from saying that he is in God **[444]** just like we are. But if they believe he is God, and they have learned to worship him as one who is God by nature, why do they not grant that he is in his begetter and has his begetter in himself in a God-befitting way? That is what I think is most fitting to think and say for those who truly love God. But if we find them imperviously pursuing their shamelessness and holding to the words they have spoken, and they say that the Son is in the Father just as each of us, let's say, who are from nothing and were created from the earth through him, what would prevent any of us who wishes from saying without danger, "Whoever has seen me has seen the Father," and, "I am in the Father and the Father is in me"?[181] But I think anyone would be quite rightly condemned for doing this on the charge of extreme foolishness. Such a statement is discordant and was made by none of the saints in the divinely inspired Scripture. They all ascribe to the Only Begotten, who is by nature Lord and God, incomparable superiority in all good qualities. Indeed, they cry out, "Who among the sons of God will be compared to the Lord?"[182] How then can the Only Begotten be like us, since no one is equal to or like him according to the statement of the saints? If he is in God in the same way we are, how are we not forced to say that the company of saints is lying and that we should ascribe nothing superior to him who is Son by nature that would distinguish him from those who are sons by adoption? Away with such a loathsome thought, man! We will not think this way. God forbid! Rather, we believe that by following the teachings of the holy fathers, we will be approved by God.

As proof of what they think and say, they bring forward that statement of Paul that in God "we live and move and have our being"[183] to show that the Son is said to be in the Father using imprecise language drawn from our experience. Come, then, let us subject their statement to the requisite scrutiny and so convict **[445]** them of deliberately misrepresenting the mind of the holy apostles and of foolishly twisting what was said with utter correctness to their own view. When the blessed Paul was in Athens and saw the inhabitants completely devoted to the polytheistic error even though the people there were convinced they were wise, he tried to lead them away from their ancient error through arguments for godly worship, seeking skillfully to convince them of the necessity of knowing the one and only God, who grants to his creatures that they move and live and have their being. He gives life to all, since the creator of all is life by nature, ineffably implanting the power

[178]This statement uses the terms *hypostasis* (ὑπόστασις) and *substance* (οὐσία) as synonyms, reflecting the fact that these technical trinitarian and christological terms had not yet been precisely defined.

[179]Rom 1:22.

[180]2 Pet 2:1.

[181]Jn 14:9, 10.

[182]Ps 89:6 (Ps 88:7 LXX).

[183]Acts 17:28.

of his own property into them. In no other way could those who received their origin from nothing be preserved in existence (since they would immediately return to their own nature, I mean nonexistence) unless by their relationship to the one who exists they overcome the weakness of their origin. Therefore, the divinely inspired Paul correctly and very beautifully shows that God is the life of all since in him we live and move and have our being.[184] He does not at all mean what the heretics invent to suit their own view, as they corrupt the correct meaning of the Holy Scriptures. Rather he is saying what is true and highly profitable for those who are just being led to a knowledge of God. And if we need to put it more clearly, he does not intend to indicate that we who are humans by nature are contained in the substance of the Father and that we are manifestly in him, but that we live and move and have our being in God, that is, we hold together in him.

Notice that Paul did not simply say, "We are in God," and nothing more. I think that is because of your ignorance, my friend. He explained what he intended to say using different expressions. First, he put "we live"; then he added, "and move"; **[446]** and third he added, "and have our being," as an aid to understanding the previous words. I think the right argument on our part will perhaps put to shame the enemy of God. But if he insists on his own position and drags the words *in God* to the view held by him and him alone, we will set forth the customary usage of the divinely inspired Scripture. It is normal for Scripture sometimes to say "in God" instead of "through God." Let the heretic tell us how it is that someone in the Psalms cries out, "In God we shall accomplish powerful deeds!"[185] And again, addressing God he says, "In you we will push down our enemies."[186] Surely no one would think that he says this promising that they could accomplish powerful deeds in the substance of God, and neither does the psalmist say that in that substance they will push down their enemies. Rather he says "in God" instead of "through God," and "in you" instead of "through you." And why did the blessed Paul say in his letter to the Corinthians, "I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that has been given you in Christ Jesus,"[187] and again, "From him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification and redemption"?[188] Will any sensible person claim that the Spirit-bearer is saying that the grace given to the Corinthians from above was given in the very substance of Christ? Will they understand it in some other way related to this? How could they not be exposed as talking nonsense? Why then do you dismiss the customary usage of the Holy Scriptures and misrepresent the intention of the blessed Paul and say that we are in God, that is, in the substance of the Father, when you hear Paul saying to the Athenians, "In him we live and move and have our being"?

All right, says that advocate of these pernicious doctrines, **[447]** if it seems right to you that "in God" means and is understood to mean "through God," why do you engage in such needless nonsense? Why do you subject us to the charge of blasphemy when we insist that the Son was made through the Father? Look, the Son himself says, "I am in the Father," which means "through the Father" according to your own argument, my friend, and the customary usage of the Holy Scriptures, which you just presented to us.

I say that I must defend myself in reply to this and lay bare their mischief and harm. I am

[184]Acts 17:28.
[185]Ps 60:12 (Ps 59:14 LXX).
[186]Ps 44:5 (Ps 43:6 LXX).
[187]1 Cor 1:4.
[188]1 Cor 1:30.

surprised that they gladly hear that it is the customary usage of the divine Scripture to say "in God" instead of "through God," and that they agree with and accept this idea only so they can attack the glory of the Only Begotten, but they do not realize that they will still be caught speaking nonsense, even though they claim to be wise and sharp. If our opponents were the only ones entrusted with constantly defending the usage of the divinely inspired Scripture regarding the substance of the Only Begotten, and if they claimed that the Son was made by the Father because he says that he is "in God" (since we have granted that "in God" is understood to mean "through God"), it might seem that their fraud has a probable rationale that is not altogether ignorant. But if there is nothing to prevent us too—with the intention of refuting their unsound doctrines with an even greater absurdity—from applying the meaning just indicated to the Father himself and from saying explicitly that since the Son says, "The Father is in me," this should be understood to mean "through me" so that the Father himself is created; how will those who rely on such stupid arguments not receive the verdict of sheer foolishness? Just as the Son says that he is in the Father, so also he says that the Father is in him. If they want to understand "in the Father" to mean "through the Father," what is to prevent us from saying that "in the Son" should be understood to mean "through the Son"? **[448]** But we will not allow ourselves to sink to their level of foolishness. We will say neither that the Son is made by the Father nor that God the Father, from whom all things exist, is created by the Son. Rather we will apply the usage of the divinely inspired Scripture appropriately to each time and person and event, and we will weave together an account that is pure and irreproachable in all essential points. For those beings who have been brought into being from nonexistence and have been created by God, how would it not be appropriate to think and to say of them that they are "in God," that is, "through God"? However, for him who is by nature Son and Lord and God and creator of all, I do not think that this designation would be truly and strictly speaking appropriate. Rather, he is naturally in the Father and exists in him and has the Father in himself by a clear identity of substance, and it is completely impossible for anything to divide and separate them into different substances.

Now perhaps it may seem to the more learned, as it seems to me, that the matter has been sufficiently discussed. But our opponent will not agree with this at all. He will dust off the argument that he brought up at the beginning and say once again that the Father is in the Son just as we are in him.

What then (we might say as we judiciously rebuke him for thinking and expressing unsound and childish views), do you say that the Son is in the Father just as we are in him? Fine. But then what limit of our nature, we will reply, prevents us from exalting ourselves with the same words we see Christ himself using? Since he is in the Father and he has the Father in himself—in that he is thereby his image and exact imprint—he says, "Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. I and the Father are one." But tell me, if we are in him and we have him in us in exactly the same way as **[449]** he is in the Father and the Father is in him, why do we not extend our necks and hold our heads high to those around us and boldly say, "I am in Christ and Christ is in me; whoever has seen me has seen Christ; I and Christ are one?" And what happens after that? I do not think anyone would have a good reason to fear or an appropriate reason to hesitate any longer from daring to say the same thing about the Father himself: "I and the Father are one." After all, if the Father is one with the Son, surely someone who has become the exact image of an exact image (that is, the Son) will be related in the same way to the Father himself. Now who would ever descend

to such madness as to dare to say, "Whoever has seen me has seen Christ; I and Christ are one"? But if you assert that the Son is in the Father and has the Father in himself by relation and not by nature, just as we are in Christ and Christ is in us: first the Son would be ranked with us. Second, nothing would prevent us from going past the Son, if we wished, as if he were some obstacle in our way, and rushing to the Father himself and claiming that we are so precisely like him that no difference can be seen. That is what it would mean to speak of being one with something. Do you not see to what stupidity and ungodliness their minds have sunk, and what an absurd clamor of arguments has attacked us?

Now I will explain their reason for saying and maintaining these things and for supporting themselves with such stale arguments. They have one goal: to show the Son to be altogether alien and foreign to the essence of the Father. And we will know that we are telling the truth from the words that come right after his previous blasphemies. He adds this: "Just as we are in him, **[450]** but we maintain our hypostasis unmixed with him, in the same way the Son is in the Father but has a substance distinct from the unbegotten God."[189] What are you saying, you thunderstruck person? Have you made your blasphemy against the Son so open? After that, no one will say that we are trying to heap groundless accusations on the head of the enemies of God, will they? You can see clearly that they ascribe no superiority to him over those who are made from the earth and brought into being by him. And though I can scarcely bear what those wretched people have the audacity to say, I will try to demonstrate that, in accordance with the view of the divine Scripture, since they deny the Son, they deny the Father as well, and they are finally without God, having no hope in this world, as it is written.[190]

John, who was loved by God, will take the stand as a reliable witness for us that we speak the truth. He has written of "the one who denies the Father and the Son. No one who denies the Son has the Father; everyone who confesses the Son has the Father also."[191] Surely the Spirit-bearer is correct and does not advocate a view that is out of harmony with reason. Since he knows that God the Father is by nature what he is said to be, namely a father—not in name only but also in actuality—he accordingly says that one is denied together with the other. Along with one who is and is understood to be a father by nature, there always comes a knowledge of and a reference to the offspring that proceeded from him, and the person of the one who is naturally capable of begetting is conceived of together with the one who is begotten in truth. As soon as we know of a father, we understand that he has begotten someone, and if we learn of an offspring, it is surely established that the offspring sprang from some father. Therefore, through each of them the knowledge of the other is begotten in the hearers. So whoever denies that God is truly a father will also surely deny the begetting of the Son. And **[451]** whoever does not confess the Son to be an offspring will surely lose the knowledge of the Father. So when they hurl their unholy arguments at us and maintain that the Son has an essence that is distinct from the unbegotten God, how are they not clearly admitting that he is not a son? And if he is not a son, then the Father himself could no longer be understood to be a father. Whose father would he be if he has not begotten an offspring?

For our part, we say that he is distinct not from the essence but from the person of the Father. He is not by nature foreign to the Father, as the enemies of God no doubt think,

[189]See note 178 above.

[190]Eph 2:12.

[191]1 Jn 2:22-23.

but he is and is understood to exist in his own person and in his own distinct subsistence. After all, he is the Son, not the Father. However, we would not say that he is distinct in essence, if we think rightly, nor would we agree with any of the brothers who say so. How could there be a distinction in the one area within which each one exists individually? Peter is Peter and not Paul, and Paul is not Peter, but they remain without distinction according to their nature. The definition of their substance is the same for both, and those who are joined in a natural unity have the exact same definition.

Why do we say these things? Our goal is to demonstrate that they are thinking blasphemously when they remove the Son from his natural divinity, ascribing to him nothing more, as we already said, than a nonessential relationship with God the Father. Otherwise why do they put us forward as an example of their argument, saying, "Just as we maintain our hypostasis unmixed with him, even though we are in him, so also he himself has an essence that is distinct from God, even though he is said to be in him"?[192] Is not their craftiness apparent to everyone? Would not one be right in saying that the man who vomited forth such an abominable statement must be one of the **[452]** "mockers" foretold by the Spirit? What does Jude, a disciple of the Savior, write to us? "But you, beloved, must remember the predictions of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ; for they said to you, 'In the last time there will be mockers, indulging their own ungodly lusts.' It is these worldly people, devoid of the Spirit, who are causing divisions."[193] No one at all who speaks by the Holy Spirit will say anything against the glory of the Only Begotten. I maintain that this is the same as saying, "Let Jesus be cursed."[194]

Worldly and wretched men, who have a heart devoid of the Holy Spirit, divide the Son from the Father, asserting that there is an essential separation between them, just as there is between God and creation (and each being that was made by him). They think that he is in the Father just as we are in him.

Come, let us next examine the divine Scripture to see that they have reached the summit of ignorance when they dare to write these things. And let us be eager to show our hearers that we are in the Son in one way, but the Son is in the Father in another. The Son is not conformed to the Father by voluntary virtue; he is the image of his hypostasis and is in him for that reason, having an identical nature and having one essence with him. Let us summon the most wise John as a witness for us on this point, who says, "And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ."[195] How then do they say, and in what manner do they think it fit to assert, that we have fellowship with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ? If we are thought to be in them by mixing, as it were, our essence with the divine nature (that is, with the Father and the Son), and the term *fellowship* does not rather **[453]** refer to the similarity of wills, how could we have fellowship with the Father and with the Son, when according to the heretics they are not consubstantial? We would have to take a ridiculous position and say that we cut our nature in two and give half to the Father and the other half to the Son, and that is how we are understood to be in them. Or we reject the absurdity of this statement and say that by the virtues of the will and by conforming to the divine and ineffable beauty we are eager to cleanse our mind and obtain the grace of fellowship with them. But will we say that the Son is in the Father in this sense or that he has a relational and artificial fellowship with his begetter? If so, why in the world does he

[192]See note 178 above.
[193]Jude 17-19.
[194]1 Cor 12:3.
[195]1 Jn 1:3.

want to lead our mind through equal and similar works to the necessity of believing without hesitation that he is in the Father, and that he has the Father, in turn, in himself? Is it not utterly clear to everyone and true that he wants us to investigate the glory of his works and that he shows himself to be equal in strength to his Father, so that any essential separation or natural difference no longer stands, since both he and his Father glorify themselves by equal accomplishments?

Notice how it is that, when we strive for conformity with God, we are considered worthy of fellowship with him not in this way but in a different way. When we show pity to one another and are ardently devoted to works of love and practice holiness in our lives, then we are (barely) said to be in God. John is our witness when he says, "By this we know that we are in him: whoever says, 'I abide in him,' ought to walk just as he walked."[196] And again, "Let what you heard from the beginning **[454]** abide in you. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, then you will abide in the Son and in the Father."[197] And he himself clarifies for us that the message that was from the beginning that he commands should abide in us that we may be in God: "For this is the message you have heard from the beginning, that you should love one another."[198] You hear in what sense we are in God, namely, in that we practice love toward one another and we are eager to follow in the footsteps of the Savior's virtue, as far as possible. By virtue I do not mean that by which he was able to create the heavens or make the angels or establish the earth or spread out the sea. Neither am I referring to the virtue in him with which by his ineffable and simple power he lulled violent winds to sleep with a word or raised the dead or graced the blind with sight or commanded with great authority that the leper be cleansed. Rather I am referring to that virtue that is appropriate for human limitations. We will find, as Paul says, that when he was abused by the unholy Jews, "he did not return abuse; when he suffered, he did not threaten; but he entrusted himself to the one who judges justly."[199] Again, we find him saying, "Learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls."[200]

Therefore, when we are eager to imitate Christ, our guide in all virtue, with conduct like this, we are said to abide in the Father and in him, obtaining this as a reward and compensation, so to speak, for our holiness of life. But the Son does not want us to estimate his glory from these things. Instead, he commands us to direct our attention to the magnitude of his miracles, there to see the exact resemblance that he has with his Father, and to believe that **[455]** it is because he is consubstantial that he has his begetter in himself, and he is in his Father. Or let our opponents come forward and teach that he is understood to be in the Father as a reward and a fair payment for a way of life in accordance with the evangelical law, just like we are. I do not think even this will seem terrible to them. After all, for those for whom no form of babbling is unpracticed, what statement, no matter how horrible it sounds, would not be fit for their use? They will probably say that the Son is in the Father and that he has the Father in himself in the sense that he is conformed to the Father by virtues that are attainable by us. Well, fine sirs, we would reply, when Philip said, "Lord, show us the Father,"[201] why did Christ not present all the holy apostles as an image and precise likeness of him whom they meant? Why did he not say, "Have we been with one another all this time, and still you do not know

[196] 1 Jn 2:5-6.
[197] 1 Jn 2:24.
[198] 1 Jn 3:11.
[199] 1 Pet 2:23.
[200] Mt 11:29.
[201] Jn 14:8.

the Father?" As it is, however, he does not compare himself with any of the others, but he presents himself alone as the image of the Father alone. He passes over our attributes as completely insignificant, not wanting to use them to give a precise representation of the divine essence, and he reserves the ultimate likeness to himself alone. "Whoever has seen me," he says, "has seen the Father."[202] Then he immediately adds, "Believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me."[203] When he has an exact and complete resemblance, how could he not have the Father in himself and be had, as it were, by the Father?

Consider a case like the following and receive it as an illustration of what we have said. If someone were to summon the child of Abraham or of any other man, for that matter, and question him about the nature of his parent, desiring to learn who he is and what sort of person he is, would not the youth give a good answer if he pointed to his own nature and said, "Whoever has seen me has seen my father; I am in my father and my father **[456]** is in me"? Then as proof that he is speaking the truth, would it not be fitting for him to bring up the identity in their human works and physical attributes, saying, "Because of the works themselves believe me, since I have everything and am strong enough to do everything that belongs to human nature"? I think that everyone will admit and rightly agree that he is telling the truth when he cites the identity of their works as a decisive proof. Why then do those who "pervert what is right"[204] not persuade their own disciples to travel on the straight road of understanding instead of driving them off the royal and well-traveled road to take an untrodden and rugged route, both deceiving themselves and destroying those who think they should follow them? We, however, will not take that road. We will keep to the direct road. Persuaded by the Holy Scriptures, we believe that the Son, who was begotten of the Father by nature, is equal in power and consubstantial with God the Father and that he is his image, and that is why he is in the Father and the Father is in him.

14:12-13 "Truly, truly I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do and, in fact, will do greater works than these, because I am going to the Father. I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son."

If anyone thinks to extend the discussion to cover the breadth of the ideas in this passage, that discussion would be wide and deep. But if we attend to what is most profitable for the hearers, we will think it appropriate to grasp the basic meaning and to curtail the length of our discourse. In this way, the meaning would more readily be received by most people. He wants to show that he is of the same substance as the one who begat him and that **[457]** he is his imprint, who is carried by the Father as by an archetype and has the archetype in himself as a natural and essential imprint, not understood to be formed by some kind of process of shaping. (After all, the divine transcends shape because it is incorporeal.) So he says, "I am in the Father and the Father is in me."[205] But so that we may not look for the identical likeness and exact conformity in any other way than by looking only at the attributes that belong to nature (since there one may see an essential and natural resemblance), he says, "If not, believe from the works."[206] He quite rightly thought that if anyone should see him glorious with the same accomplishments as God the Father, he would be accepted as a true natural

[202]Jn 14:9.
[203]Jn 14:11.
[204]Mal 3:9.
[205]Jn 14:11.
[206]Jn 14:11.

imprint and image of his essence. After all, something that is not God by nature could never perform deeds equal to God, nor could it happen that any creature would ever be able to do miracles that are equal in measure to the divine nature. The good attributes of him who always exists are inaccessible and beyond the reach of those who have been called into being from nonexistence.

Probably no one would doubt that the Savior's statement will be completely irreproachable, at least by those who think rightly. Yet as God, he was not unaware that even what is well said can be an excuse and a pretext for erroneous teaching on the part of those who hold the opposite opinion. So that no place may be left for the incessant babbling on this point of those who pervert what is right, and so that they may not say that the Son has become a worker of wonders not by his own strength or power but only because he had the Father in him doing the works (as he himself said and insisted),[207] the Lord healed them, as the occasion demanded, by alluring their thoughts. In this passage, he promises to supply those who believe in him with whatever they want to ask. And he promises not only to supply them with this power and authority **[458]** but even more. [The believer] "will do greater works" than I have done, he says. Do you see how beneficially he has cut off the boldness of the opponents and he reins in with his reproaches those who are going over the cliffs? Anyone will say to them: O ignorant and blind people, you have assumed that the Son can accomplish nothing on his own but that he has been supplied with the power and authority to be able to accomplish all the miracles by the Father. How does he promise to grant to those who believe in him that they do "greater things"? How could someone else borrow power from him to accomplish something he himself has not done? Notice that he does not say here that the Father will supply power to the believers, but "I will do whatever you ask in my name." As God, he gives to others the power to do greater things. How then could he himself be supplied with power from another? Therefore, what they say is utter nonsense, idle chatter and an invention of demonic perversity. No one would conceive of the Son's power to be limited or to reach one thing but be insufficient to reach something greater. His power effortlessly does whatever it wishes and grants to the worthy to glory in positions that are equal or perhaps even greater. Now let no one think we are saying that he will ever give to those who have honored him with faith the power to create the sky, the sun, and the moon, or to illuminate the chorus of stars, or to create the angels, let's say, or the earth or the things on earth. The intent of his statement is not directed at these things but at things that are reasonable. He does not exceed the measure of splendor that is appropriate for humanity, I mean in glory and holiness. That is why he restrains his words, so to speak, from running wherever one might wish, confining them only to those miracles he performed on earth when he had become a human being **[459]** and contrasting their magnitude with deeds that are greater still. "He will do greater works than these" that I have done, he says. It was not because he was too weak to accomplish the greater things that he held back his power within the bounds of what he accomplished. He did what he needed to and as much as the particular moment required. But with these words he beneficially teaches us that the incomprehensible magnitude of his authority cannot be exhausted by these deeds. But in order to preserve the order of the passage, we will set the mind of the hearers on the contemplation of his words. "Truly," he says, "I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do and, in fact, will do greater works than these, because I am going to the Father."

[207]Jn 14:10.

"What does this mean?" one of the hearers may reasonably ask. "I mean, the Son goes to the Father to enable those who believe in him to do even greater works than the ones exhibited by him?" Clearly this statement has a hidden meaning. Think of what he is saying to be something like this: O ministers and genuine students of my word, while I lived with you on earth, I behaved as a man and did not display the sheer power of my divine nature to you. I spoke and acted in a way that was commensurate with the measure of humility and the form of a servant. But when those things have been appropriately accomplished, then the mystery of my *oikonomia* with the flesh will be fulfilled as well. Almost immediately I will suffer death and rise again. And I promise to grant you the ability to do even greater miracles than mine, since the time of this generosity is at hand. For "I am going to the Father" to sit down with him and rule with him as God from God in unveiled power and glory . . . and to grant blessings from my own nature **[460]** to those who are genuine.[208] "I will do," he says, "whatever you ask in my name" when the time has been fulfilled in which I needed to appear in a humble form. Now I promise to perform divine works openly as God, not to exclude the Father from such God-befitting glory, "but so that he may be glorified in the Son." After all, when the offspring is glorified, the one who begat him will surely be glorified in him. Since the Son is God by nature, he has been revealed through many other signs as well. But he is revealed no less by receiving the prayers of the saints and supplying them with whatever they ask for and desire. How, then, could the Father not be glorified in him? Just as he would have reasonably been blamed if the offspring that proceeded from him were not God by nature, so also it will be to his great glory that the fruit that proceeded from his essence is true God, who can do all things and gives others the grace to do them as well.

But if the fact that the Son is seen to have God-befitting attributes contributes to the glory of the Father, what kind of punishment will be meted out to the heretic who does not fear to belittle him blasphemously in many ways? And I will say something else that I think opposes their limitless ignorance. If we pray to the Son and request our petitions from him, and he promises to give them to us, how could he not be God by nature, begotten of him who is by nature God? But if they suppose he is not this, but they say he is originate, how will we now distinguish him from the sun or the sky or any other creature? If they are ashamed of the ugliness of their own irrationality, and they mischievously say that he is a creature equal to other creatures **[461]** but has some kind of incomparable superiority over all things, let them understand that this is no less an insult to the glory of the Father, that is, the Son, so long as they maintain that he is numbered among the creatures. The question is not whether he is a great creature or a small one but whether he is a creature at all and not rather God by nature (which is the truth).

14:14 "If in my name you ask me for anything, I will do it."

He now openly says that, as true God, he will quite readily accept the prayers of his own and with the greatest ease supply whatever they want to receive, namely, gifts that are spiritual and worthy of the heavenly generosity. And he makes this statement not as a servant of someone else's love for humanity, nor as a minister of another's mercy, but as one who holds all things in his power along with the Father. He is the one "through whom are all things,"[209] both from us to God and from God to us. That is why Paul always prays for the

[208]There is a lacuna in the text in this sentence.

[209]1 Cor 8:6.

supply of blessings to be yoked to the worthy by saying, "Grace to you and peace from God our Father and from our Lord Jesus Christ."[210] Now no one with any sense will think that the Father grants a certain amount of grace as his own, while the Son, in turn, grants his own partial grace, as it were. No, the grace is one and the same, even though it is said to come through both of them. All blessings are given and the distribution of divine gifts is made by the Father through the Son to the worthy. The Son is not thought of in the category of a servant, as we have said, but he is considered and truly is a cogiver and cosupplier. The nature of the divinity is, and so is believed to be, one. Even though it is expanded into the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, it does not have an absolute and [**462**] complete gap, I mean between each of the persons indicated. We will be certain, if we think rightly, that the Son is naturally both from the Father and in the Father, and the Father's and Son's own Spirit is both from the Father and in him. Since the divine nature is and is understood to be one, the blessings from them will be supplied to the worthy through the Son, from the Father, in the Spirit, while our offerings will be carried to God through the mediation of the Son. "For no one comes to the Father except through" him, as he himself has of course confessed.[211] So the Son has become and is the gate and the way of our friendship with God and of our progress toward God. He is also the cogiver and distributor of the gifts that come from him, since they come from one common generosity. The divine nature is one, in the person and hypostasis of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Since the ancients were not accustomed to approaching the Father through the Son, and it was foreign to their practice, he beneficially teaches this too. Laying the foundation for the practice, as it were, first in his disciples, he implants in them the faith and instruction on this point, and he extends also to us instruction on how we are to pray and where we are to find our hope. He promises to grant us what we pray for, which is an indication of his divine nature and the royal authority within him, adding this to the other proofs.

14:15 "If you love me, keep my commandments."

After he commands that those who pray should ask in his name, and he promises that he will supply the petitioners with whatever they want to receive, he takes great care not to appear to be speaking falsely because of the unholy slanders of those who habitually [**463**] love to argue. After all, it is possible to see, even in the Holy Scriptures themselves, that some approach and ask in his name, but receive nothing, since God is not unaware of what is fitting for each person and profitable for those asking. So in order to show clearly to whom this statement applies and to whom the grace of the promise is due and for whom the promise will be true, our Lord Jesus Christ immediately brings up those who love him and links his statement to the one who precisely keeps the law. In so doing, he shows that to them and no one else the promise of kindness and his gift of spiritual blessings will hold good and come to pass. From what Christ's disciple strains to write, you may easily understand that the generous hand of God often draws back in hesitation from those who will not ask rightly, cutting them off from the results for which they hope. He writes, "You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, in order to spend what you get on your pleasures."[212] And of those who are habitually double-minded, he says, "that person must not think he will receive anything

[210]Phil 1:2.
[211]Jn 14:6.
[212]Jas 4:3.

from the Lord. For the man is double-minded, unstable in all his ways."[213] For those who ask not for grace from above to achieve virtue but for the enjoyment of carnal pleasures and worldly desires, God practically shuts his ears and gives them nothing. How could he grant anyone what he forbids and rejects because of the abomination they contain? How could the fount of all sweetness give forth a bitter stream? But you will easily see that he distributes blessings with a rich and ready hand to those who love spiritual gifts when you hear him saying to them through Isaiah the prophet, "While you are still speaking, I will say, 'What is it?'"[214] And through the voice of the psalmist, **[464]** he says that "the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and his ears are attentive to their prayers."[215]

After defining and explicitly stating that the enjoyment of heavenly blessings, supplied through him from the Father, is owed to and surely will be possessed by those who love him, he immediately describes the power of love and instructs us excellently and irreproachably for our profit that we should practice it. If someone merely claims to love God, they will carry off no glory for truly loving, since the power of that virtue is not in mere speech, nor is the beauty of reverence toward God fashioned in bare words. Rather it is clearly recognized by the accomplishment of good deeds and by an obedient temperament. The keeping of the divine commands best depicts love for God and presents truly living virtue, not sketched in shadows by the mere sounds of the tongue, as we have said, but gleaming, as it were, and completely shining with bright colors, which is the appearance of good works. For example, our Lord Jesus Christ clearly shows us this when he says, "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven."[216] Faith is proven not by the empty flattery of words but by the quality of works. Indeed, the divine Scripture says that this faith is dead when works do not follow.[217] We will find the knowledge that God is one, it says, not only in human minds but also in the unclean demons themselves, who shudder even against their will at the power of the creator.[218] To make the brilliance of their deeds concurrent with their faith, however, is a glory that clearly belongs only to those who truly love God. Therefore, **[465]** keeping the gospel teachings and obeying the divine commands is the proof of love and the most perfect definition of faith. It is perhaps not difficult to make other similar statements that have the same meaning, but I think it is not the right time for that.

We must proceed, then, to points that are more relevant to the passage before us. "If you love me," he says, "keep my commandments." Now understand and recall well that often when he was speaking with his disciples or even with the Jews themselves, he said, "The words that I say are not my own, but they belong to him who sent me."[219] And again, "I do not speak on my own, but the Father who sent me has himself given me a commandment about what to say and what to speak."[220] And again, "What I speak, therefore, is not mine, but belongs to him who sent me."[221] Yet although he has confessed all over the place that the words he addressed to us belong to God the Father, he now says what he has spoken to us are his own commandments. And no one in their right mind would think he is lying. Let this thought not enter the mind of a Christian! He must tell the truth because he

[213]Jas 1:7-8.
[214]Is 65:24; cf. Is 58:9.
[215]Ps 34:15 (Ps 33:16 LXX).
[216]Mt 7:21.
[217]Jas 2:20, 26.
[218]Jas 2:19.
[219]Jn 14:10, 24.
[220]Jn 12:49.
[221]Cf. Jn 12:50.

himself *is* the truth. It was not as one in the rank of a minister or servant, like one of the prophets, that he conveyed to us the message from the Father, but as one who bears his likeness so that not even in their words may any difference be seen. By nature he speaks just as the Father himself would speak. The exact similarity of essence persuades us that the Son says the same things as his parent. In that he is the Word and wisdom and counsel of God the Father, he says that he has received a commandment about what to say and what to speak. Each of us sees our mind basically commanding the speech that is expressed through words, as it proceeds outside of us, to interpret what is in the mind. The power of this example is small as it is applied to God, but [**466**] by taking an image of our affairs to assure us of what transcends us, we apprehend the divine mystery in a mirror and an enigma.

14:16-17 "And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Paraclete to be with you forever. This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, because he abides with you, and he will be in you."

Next he mixes what is human with what is God-befitting. He neither ascends to the sheer glory of divinity nor completely stays within the limits of humanity, but he miraculously and indistinguishably goes through both, since he is both God and a human being in one. He is God by nature in that he is the fruit of the Father and the radiance of his essence. And he is a human being in that he has become flesh. Therefore, he speaks both as God and as a human being. In this way, it was possible to preserve intact the words that are fitting for the *oikonomia* in the flesh.

Now when we investigate the meaning of the passage, we say the following: our Lord at this time makes mention of God the Father, as the situation requires, for the building up of the faith and for the great profit of the hearers, just as our discussion will demonstrate as it proceeds. He commanded us to ask in his name,[222] and he revealed, along with other truths, a way of praying that was foreign to the practice of the ancients, promising to give them quite eagerly whatever they wish to receive. Lest he seem to exclude the person of God the Father from these matters or take away the authority of the one who fathered him (I mean when it comes to generosity shown to the saints), he said that the Father would be a cosupplier for our benefit and [**467**] would join in granting us the Paraclete. He adds the words *I will ask* as a human being and ascribes to the entire divine and ineffable nature what is most fitting for it in terms of attributes, in the person of God the Father. That was his custom, after all, as we have often said before.

"Another Paraclete," however, is what he calls the Spirit who is from the essence of the Father and from his own essence.[223] The definition of the essence is the same in the case of both, not excluding the Spirit but granting that the manner of his distinctness is to be understood only in the fact that he is and subsists in his own person. The Spirit is not the Son, but we will accept in faith that he truly is and subsists personally as that which he is, since he is the Spirit of the Father and of the Son. Since the Son knows that he himself is also truly a Paraclete and is called that in the divine Scriptures, he calls the Spirit

[222] Jn 14:14.

[223] Here Cyril uses language that sounds similar to the Western notion that the Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son (*filioque*). For a discussion of this issue, see Marie-Odile Boulnois, "The Mystery of the Trinity according to Cyril of Alexandria: The Deployment of the Triad and Its Recapitulation into the Unity of Divinity," in *The Theology of St Cyril of Alexandria: A Critical Appreciation,* ed. Thomas G. Weinandy and Daniel A. Keating (London & New York: T&T Clark, 2003), 106-8.

"another Paraclete." He is not implying that the Spirit can effect something in the saints, let's say, besides what he can do. The Spirit is and is called his Spirit. That the Son also is and is called a Paraclete, John will testify when he says in his writings, "I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have a Paraclete with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous one; and he is the atoning sacrifice for our sins."[224] So he calls the Spirit "another Paraclete," willing him to be conceived of in his own hypostasis, but having such likeness to the Son and having such power to do exactly the same things as the Son himself might do, that he seems to be none other than the Son. The Spirit is the Son's Spirit, after all. For example, he called him "the Spirit of truth," while he also says in the discourse before us that he is the truth.[225]

[468] Now someone might reasonably say to those who think that the Son is foreign to the substance of God the Father: And how, tell me, does the Father give the "Spirit of truth," that is, the Spirit of the Son, not as something alien or foreign, but as his own Spirit, even though according to you the definition of his substance is different from that of the Son, and the Spirit is the Spirit of the Son (and there is no doubt about that)? And how, if the Son is of a different substance, does he give the Spirit of the Father as his own? It is written, "He breathed on his disciples and said, 'Receive the Holy Spirit.'"[226] So would not someone be quite right in thinking, or rather in being firmly convinced, that since the Son ontologically shares the natural attributes of God the Father, he has the Spirit in the same way that the Father is understood to have him, not as something imported from the outside (it would be silly, or rather crazy to think this), but just as all of us possess our own spirit in ourselves and pour it forth from the inmost parts of our body? That is why Christ physically breathes on them. He is showing that just as the physical breath proceeds from the human mouth, so also his Spirit pours forth in a God-befitting way from his divine nature. So since he is the Spirit both of God the Father and of the Son, how could he not have absolutely the same authority they do, both separately and together? The Father is a father and not a son. And the Son is a son and not a father. Yet the Father is in the Son, and the Son is in the Father. Furthermore, it is not the Father by himself or the Son by himself who gives the Paraclete, or the Holy Spirit; rather, he is supplied to the saints from the Father through the Son. That is why, when the Father is said to have given, **[469]** the Son, "through whom are all things," also gives. And when the Son is said to have given, the Father, "from whom are all things," also gives.[227]

I suppose no one who thinks rightly doubts that the Spirit is divine and not of a different substance (than the Father himself, I mean, and the Son). Furthermore, a cogent argument will convince us of this. If one claims that he is not from the substance of the Father, how could a creature who has received the Spirit be a partaker in God? How will we be called and be "temples of God"[228] if we receive a created or foreign spirit and not rather the Spirit of God? How are those who participate in the Spirit "partakers in the divine nature,"[229] according to the words of the saints, if he is numbered among originate beings and does not rather proceed to us from the divine nature itself? He does not pass through it to us as something foreign, but he becomes a certain quality, so to speak, of the divine nature in us. He dwells in the saints and remains with them forever, if they cleanse the eye of their mind by

[224] 1 Jn 2:1-2.
[225] Jn 14:6.
[226] Jn 20:22.
[227] 1 Cor 8:6.
[228] 1 Cor 3:16.
[229] 2 Pet 1:4.

all goodness and by an unyielding eagerness for all virtue, and thus preserve the grace they have. Christ says the Spirit is incomprehensible and invisible to those in the world (that is, to those who love what is in the world and who choose to love what is earthly), but he is comprehensible and easily seen by the saints. Why? Those who have an ingrained uncleanness and have filled their mind with an unhealthy humor, as it were, do not gaze upon the beauty of the divine nature or receive the law of the Spirit because they are completely tyrannized by the passions of the flesh. Those who are good and who are sober, on the other hand, have a heart that is free from the evils of the world and willingly bring the Paraclete into themselves. And after they have received him, they keep him and, insofar as is possible for humans, behold him spiritually, thus obtaining a prize that is large and great and **[470]** enviable. He will sanctify them and make them performers of all good works. He will free them from the shame of slavery that goes with the human condition and will clothe them with the honor of adoption. Paul testifies to this when he says, "Because you are children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our heart, crying, 'Abba! Father!'"[230]

14:18 "I will not leave you as orphans; I am coming to you."

Christ now appropriately finishes his discourse on the holy and consubstantial Trinity. He has already shown that he is both God by nature and that he is begotten of God the Father, setting forth both words and facts to assure those who love him. He is equal to him in power and like-minded with him. That is why he said at one time, "The words that I say I do not speak on my own,"[231] and at another time, "If I am not doing the works of my Father, then do not believe me. But if I do them, even though you do not believe me, believe my works."[232] But in addition to this, it was also absolutely necessary to receive the right and irreproachable teaching concerning the Holy Spirit himself. In that way, the mind of the hearers could be directed completely to the right faith.

So I will set forth in a few words what Christ teaches us in the passage before us. When he says that he will send to us "another" from God the Father, he secures the definition of the faith in accordance with his wise plan. It was likely that some, who did not correctly understand what he said, would think that he was saying that the Holy Spirit is not from the substance of God (just as some ignorant people did think) but that he is different in nature. The word *another* might provide a pretext for such a view, at least for the more unlearned. **[471]** So in order to show clearly that he intended the distinction to be understood in no other way than that he exists on his own—since the Spirit is the Spirit and not the Son, just as the Son is the Son and not the Father—after saying that the Spirit will be sent, he promises that he himself will come, showing that the Spirit is not something other than what he is, since the Spirit is and is understood to be the Spirit of the Father and of him. That is why the Spirit is also called his mind. For example, Paul, referring to the same Spirit, says, "But we have the mind of Christ."[233] So we understand matters correctly and simply, and we reject as repugnant any perversion contrary to reason. We follow the words of the divinely inspired Scripture and say that the Spirit is not something other than him, as far as identity of nature is concerned, though he subsists distinctly and in his own person. I think the divinely inspired Paul understands this as he often mixes them up and refers to

[230]Gal 4:6.
[231]Jn 14:10.
[232]Jn 10:37-38.
[233]1 Cor 2:16.

each one as the same (I mean the Paraclete and the Son). You will find him saying, "Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him,"[234] and then immediately afterward, "But if Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness."[235] Do you hear how he explicitly confesses that those who have received Christ's Spirit have Christ? He also says in another place, "I think that I too have the Spirit of God."[236] And he who said this to us also says, "Since you desire proof that Christ is speaking in me."[237] He often prays for us who believe that Christ would dwell in us by faith, though he himself receives the Holy Spirit. Now let no one think that we are saying that he removes the fixity of the names or persons with respect to each other, or that he says the Son is not the Son but the Spirit, or that he did not know the Spirit as Spirit but said that he was the Son. **[472]** This was not his goal in these statements, nor is it what we believe. He knows how to count the holy and consubstantial Trinity, and he teaches that each one of those referred to subsists on his own. Yet he clearly proclaims that the holy Trinity is fixed in unchanging identity. Otherwise, how is the Spirit called God and is God? "Do you not know," he says, "that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you?"[238] Now if we have become the temples of God because the Spirit dwells in us, how is the Spirit not from God, that is, from the substance of God, since God dwells in us through him? After showing that the Spirit is not foreign to his own substance by saying that the Paraclete will be sent from the Father to the saints, the Only Begotten himself promises to come and fill the place of the Father for them so that they will not be deprived like orphans of the assistance of someone to champion them. If they did not have that assistance, they would be easy prey for the snares of the devil and easily assailed by the stumbling blocks of the world, since they are indeed many, and they must come because of the uncontrollable madness of those who bring them about. So the Father has given our souls the Spirit of Christ as a shield and as unbreakable protection to bring about his grace and presence and power in us. It is impossible for the human soul to do anything good or to overcome its passions or to escape the enormity of the devil's cunning snare unless it is protected by the grace of the Holy Spirit and thereby has Christ himself in it. Indeed, the divinely inspired psalmist, composing for us his thanksgiving for this through the wisdom that we have in him, cried out to God, "Lord, you crowned us with a shield of favor."[239] By "shield of favor," he means nothing other than the Holy Spirit who shields us and embraces us with unexpected strength to do what pleases God. Therefore, **[473]** he promises nothing less than that he will be present and through the Holy Spirit he will help those who believe in him, even though he ascends to heaven itself after his resurrection "now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf," as Paul says.[240]

14:19 "In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me; because I live, you also will live."

Now that his passion is knocking at the door and the time of his being taken up has come, he says that he will be invisible "to the world," that is, to those who regard temporal enjoyment more highly than divine blessings and who place more value on the earthly than on the heavenly. And, to complete our thought in

[234]Rom 8:9.
[235]Rom 8:10.
[236]1 Cor 7:40.
[237]2 Cor 13:3.
[238]1 Cor 3:16.
[239]Ps 5:12 (Ps 5:13 LXX).
[240]Heb 9:24.

a way that is related and consistent with what we just said, we will say with good reason that God the Father has given the Paraclete, that is, the Holy Spirit, *through the Son*, since all things are from the Father through him. Yet he has come not upon all indiscriminately, both the wicked and the good, but to those upon whom it would be fitting for him to come. As far as the most bountiful and unstinting grace of the giver is concerned, no one on earth would remain without a share. "For I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh," he says in the Prophets.[241] But each person becomes a partial cause of obtaining the God-given blessing or of not getting it at all. Some people do not purify their mind with all goodness, but they love to dwell in the evils of the world. They remain without a share of divine grace, and they will not see Christ in themselves, since they have a heart that is devoid of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, even though they are classified with the protector of the orphans, they are torn in pieces, so to speak, by everything strong enough to do violence to them, whether it be passions or a demon or some other worldly desire, and by everything **[474]** that drags them down, as it were, and forces them into sin. To the holy, however, and to those who are ready to receive him, he says with good reason, since they are going to undergo none of these things, "I will not leave you as orphans." So he says that he will be invisible and completely unseen by those who set their mind on earthly matters after his departure from there (I mean his ascension into heaven). But he says that he will be visible to the saints, since the Holy Spirit implants a certain divine and spiritual sparkle in the eyes of their heart and sows in them all good knowledge.

So we think that is what he means when he says, "In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me." Either that, or we could incline to another interpretation, especially since he combines the statement *Because I live you also will live* with what he said before, and we could reason as follows. After his resurrection from the dead, he brought about the return of our nature to what it was in the beginning, and he rendered humanity incorruptible. Then, as first fruits and for the first time in his temple,[242] he ascended to God the Father in heaven. But in a little while he will come down again, as we believe, and come to us once again "in the glory of his Father with the holy angels"[243] and will set up a terrifying tribunal for all people, both the wicked and the good. Every creature will come to judgment. He will render an appropriate judgment in accordance with the lives of each one. He will say to those on his left (that is, those who always set their minds on earthly matters), "Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels."[244] But to those on his right (that is, the holy and good), "Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you **[475]** from the foundation of the world."[245] They will be with and rule with Christ, and they will enjoy heavenly blessings, since they have been conformed to his resurrection and have escaped the nets of the ancient corruption by being clothed with long and ineffable life, living endlessly with the ever-living Lord. Paul makes clear that those who live a life that is exceptional and pleasing to God will be forever with Christ, beholding his divine and ineffable beauty. He says, "For the Lord himself, with a cry of command, with the archangel's call and with the sound of God's trumpet, will descend from heaven, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up in the clouds together with them to meet the Lord in the air; and so we will be

[241]Joel 2:28.

[242]By "temple," Cyril is referring to Christ's body. See Jn 2:21.
[243]Mt 16:27.
[244]Mt 25:41.
[245]Mt 25:34.

with the Lord forever."[246] And again, to those who have chosen to put to death worldly passions, "For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life is revealed, then you also will be revealed with him in glory."[247] So, to sum up the meaning of the statement, those who love worldly evils will go to Hades and be separated from the presence of Christ, while those who love virtue will be with him and spend eternity with him. And since they have kept the "deposit of the Spirit"[248] intact, they will be with him and behold his God-befitting beauty without hindrance. "For the Lord will be your everlasting light," it says, "and God will be your glory."[249] And it is likely that the Lord intends to indicate this when we hear him saying, "In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me; because I live, you also will live." Now he is not saying anything untrue when he says that the intervening time before his revelation, as it were, is "a little while." Time [**476**] that is long for us is nothing at all to God, who always is. The psalmist testifies to this when he says, "For a thousand years in your sight, Lord, are like yesterday when it is past, or like a watch in the night."[250]

14:20 "On that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you."

The meaning of this passage is difficult and demands a keen investigation on our part. It most appropriately gives pause to our discussion, but we believe that Christ will once again lead us to the truth. Now some people, who are sometimes taken to be preeminent among the unholy heretics, wickedly avoid confessing that the Son is from the substance of God the Father and therefore suppose that he is in him by a relational union and not a physical one. Indeed, they have written—belching up from their own heart and not from the Holy Spirit—that when the Son is loved by the Father and he loves the Father in return, that is the way he is in him. And these insane people bring up the joining of us and him in the passage before us as some kind of irrefutable proof. Indeed, they point out, basing their blasphemy on a "staff of reed,"[251] as it were, that we are said to be in him and we have him in us, yet we are not united in essence, but the manner of the union is determined by our capacity to love and be loved. In the same way, says the heretic, the Son is not at all in the essence of God the Father but is completely distinct from him, at least according to the definition of their natures, and is absolutely different from him. He is understood to be in the Father only by the law of love. Their goal, as we have just said, is to show the Only Begotten to be a handiwork and a creature and [**477**] an originate being who is honored merely with preeminence over other creatures but is external to the essence of God the Father.

Since we have already discussed this matter at length and have shown to the best of our ability that the Son is in the Father by nature and has an essential union with him, we will refrain from extending our remarks on this subject for the present. However, we will not leave the field completely devoid of arguments so that our opponents can overrun it, but we will array ourselves briefly against them, exposing as far as possible the mischief and ignorance of their wicked and loathsome artifice. In particular, we will say: If the Son is in the Father only in the sense that he is loved and loves, in the same way we are in him and he is in us, and no different bond joins the Son to the Father than joins us to him and him to us, why or how, tell me, does he say we will know this mystery "on that day"? Apparently

[246] 1 Thess 4:16-17.
[247] Col 3:3-4.
[248] 2 Cor 1:22.
[249] Is 60:19.
[250] Ps 90:4 (Ps 89:4 LXX).
[251] Is 36:6.

we do not yet know that the Father loves the Son, and the Son loves the Father. Nor do we know our own condition, I suppose, but an empty argument mocks us when we think that the Son loves us and for this reason won us for the Father, or when we love him! When he says, "On that day you will know," he shows that the time of knowledge is not yet here. So why did the Lord make our ears ring in vain by saying, "the Father loves the Son"?[252] (After all, who would not agree that he himself loves the Father?) And why, tell me, did he treat his choice to suffer for us as a clear proof of his love for us? "No one has greater love than this," he says, "to lay down one's life for one's friends."[253] And why does he clearly ask us to love him, thereby being eager to do what pleases him? Whoever loves me, **[478]** he says, will keep my commandments. When will we keep the divine command, if at present we do not understand it? Now it is fitting to believe that the Son loves the Father, and he loves us, and he is loved by us, but why would it not be consistent with this to think that the Son intends to indicate something else and to define the manner of union not by the law of love, but rather to introduce clearly another form of union when he says to us, "On that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you"?

But perhaps the opponent will reply that Christ said these things to us before his passion simply because he loves the Father and is loved in return by the Father and that he loves us and we love him. After the passion and the resurrection from the dead, however, we see that he burst the bonds of death, and so we know that he is "in the Father" in the sense that he is loved, and this is the reason for his resurrection from the dead. Furthermore, that is why he is in us and we are in him, by the same law of love.

To this we say: your response is utter nonsense, and it proceeds with unsound arguments. Consider once again, my fine friends, that we actually knew this before the resurrection; we did not need to learn it after the resurrection. Now if we believed imperfectly that the Son was loved by the Father and that he loved the Father, it really would be necessary to wait for the resurrection that we might gain perfect knowledge from it. However, if the Father is trustworthy when he says even before the resurrection, "This is my beloved Son,"[254] and if the Savior himself is telling the truth when he says, "The Father loves the Son,"[255] and if the law of love is appropriately understood in its complete perfection, why do you hit us with idle arguments? Why do you reject the beauty of the truth and fashion for us an ugly **[479]** lie, dragging away from the Father's essence the Son who is of him and through him by coming up with utterly unsound arguments and inventing a maze of absurd syllogisms? The fact that the Only Begotten loves us and we love him is open for anyone to see quite easily, if they are willing to examine the nature of the truth. Though he was in the form of God the Father, "he did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave."[256] And what, tell me, is the reason for this? Is it not his love for us? How can there be any doubt? And our willingness to be ready to abandon our very lives to our persecutors for Christ's sake, that we may not deny our Lord—would that not clearly introduce convincing proof of our love for him? One will either say that this is completely true, or one will criticize the holy martyrs for struggling for Christ to no useful purpose and for meeting such danger without any reward. Therefore, since it has been quite

[252]Jn 3:35.
[253]Jn 15:13.
[254]Mt 3:17.
[255]Jn 3:35.
[256]Phil 2:6-7.

clearly proven that the Father has perfect love for the Son, and he himself loves the Father in the same way, and we love him and he loves us, what reason could there be for supposing that the discernment of this fact is deferred to another time, when the Lord says, "On that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you"?

Away with their idle talk and the pretense of their God-hating arguments! Emboldened by the torch of the spirit, we will not hesitate to say what seems right in order to clear up the question. Now after he had said earlier, "Because I live, you also will live,"[257] he immediately adds, "On that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you." What **[480]** person alive who thinks rightly would not see quite clearly that he defines "day" as a time to learn this in which we ourselves will be transformed to be like him and will ascend to eternal life, escaping the curse of death? It seems to me that this is the meaning of what Christ—I mean Paul—is saying when he reveals the divine mystery to us and writes to certain people, "For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life is revealed, then you also will be revealed with him in glory."[258] "He will transform the body of our humiliation"—this body and not another one—"to be conformed to his glory,"[259] and he will transform human nature to what it was originally by his ineffable power, changing everything easily into whatever he wishes with no one to stop him. He is true God, "who makes all things and changes them," as it is written.[260] "On that day"—or the time in which you too will live, since I live, even though I have become a human being like you and have put on a body that has fallen into decay, at least as far as its nature is concerned—you will know clearly, he says, "that I am in the Father, and you in me, and I in you." We are convinced that the Lord says this to us not so that we may think that he is in the Father by the law of love, as the opponents think, but rather by the power of a deep mystery, which is difficult to understand and not easy to express. Nevertheless, I will try to explain it as well as I can.

Now I assume that every mind on earth is totally inadequate for an accurate exposition of these matters. Nevertheless, incited by the fervor of love to see and to speak (though within limits), **[481]** let us now examine the goal of the incarnation of the Only Begotten. Come, let us examine the reason why, although as God he was in the form of God the Father, "he did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave,"[261] and he "endured the cross, despising its shame."[262] In this way, the depth of the passage will be made visible as far as possible (though just barely). We will learn how the Son is in the Father, namely by nature and not by a relation of being loved and loving, as our opponents conceive of it. And we, in turn, are in him in the same way, and he in us. Paul expounds for us one true and general reason for the incarnation of the Only Begotten when he says that God the Father was pleased "to recapitulate all things in Christ,"[263] and that the term and the act of "recapitulation" refers to bringing back and taking up what had fallen into an unrecognizable end to what it was in the beginning. Next Paul, wanting to bring to light part of the manner of this recapitulation for us, at some point says, "For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do: by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and to deal with sin, he condemned sin

[257]Jn 14:19.
[258]Col 3:3-4.
[259]Phil 3:21.
[260]Amos 5:8 (LXX).
[261]Phil 2:6-7.
[262]Heb 12:2.
[263]Eph 1:10.

in the flesh, so that the just requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit."[264] Again at another point, "Since, therefore, the children share flesh and blood, he himself likewise shared the same things, so that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by the fear of death."[265] So Paul expounded the incarnation of the Only Begotten to have these two necessary ways of recapitulation. **[482]** The wise Evangelist John, however, set forth a way in addition to these, inclusive of the others. He writes this concerning Christ: "He came to his own, and his own did not receive him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born not from blood, nor from the will of the flesh, nor from the will of a husband, but born of God."[266] Now it is clear to everyone, I think, that the Only Begotten, though he was God from God by nature, became a human being for these reasons: to condemn sin in the flesh, to kill death by his own death, and to make us children of God, giving new birth in the Spirit to those on earth, thus elevating them to a dignity beyond their nature. It was of course a very good thing to recapitulate in this way and restore the fallen race, that is, the human race, to its original condition.[267]

Let us next place each of the reasons we just mentioned next to the Lord's statement and make the appropriate comments about it. We must ask how it would be fitting to think that God the Father condemned sin in the flesh by sending his Son in the likeness of sinful flesh. Although he is God by nature and shines forth from the Father's essence and naturally possesses the immutability of his attributes—and for this reason could never fall into sin or turn aside to what is not right—the Father ordered him voluntarily to descend into the flesh that is subject to sin in order that he might make the flesh his own and transform it to his own natural attribute, that is, sinlessness. We will certainly not hold, if we think rightly, that the Only Begotten became a human being to accomplish this for his temple alone. Where could we find the glory and benefit of his advent to us **[483]** if he only saved his own body? Rather we believe that the Only Begotten became like us to bring about blessings for our entire nature through him and in him first, as the first fruits of humanity. Just as we followed not only death, but all the sufferings of the flesh, when we experienced this in the first man because of his transgression and the divine curse, in the same way I think we will all follow Christ, who saves in many ways and sanctifies the nature of the flesh in himself. That is why Paul also said, "Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we will also bear the image of the man of heaven."[268] The image of the man of dust, that is, Adam, is to be in suffering and decay. The image of the man of heaven, that is, Christ, is to be in impassibility and incorruption. Therefore, the Word, being by nature God, condemned sin in his own flesh by commanding his flesh to be still and reforming it so that it moved toward what pleases God instead of toward its own will. In this way, though the body was "natural," he made it "spiritual."[269] So this is one manner of recapitulation. But the one that is most fitting and appropriate for interpreting the passage before us will follow next. It will be our task to speak about eternal life and the

[264]Rom 8:3-4.
[265]Heb 2:14-15.
[266]Jn 1:11-13.
[267]Note that here elevation to a dignity beyond human nature is equivalent to the restoration of humanity to its original condition. Divinization for Cyril, then, does not entail literally transcending human nature but rather returning to the original human condition of Gen 2:7, where humanity possesses life and the Holy Spirit.
[268]1 Cor 15:49.
[269]1 Cor 15:44.

death of death and to tell how the Only Begotten removed from human nature the decay that came from transgression. Therefore, "since the children share flesh and blood, he himself likewise shared the same things"[270] so that he might kill death and so that the one who "created all things" for incorruptibility and "made the generations of the world healthful," as it is written,[271] might refashion the form of things to their original condition.

And now my discussion may be more involved than is necessary, **[484]** but it must nevertheless proceed and show what our original condition was. I think a sincere desire to grasp the meaning will be completely free of the sins that arise from sluggishness. So this rational earthly animal, I mean the human being, was created from the beginning "in the image of the creator," according to the Scriptures.[272] And there are different meanings of "image." There are not one but many kinds of images. However, the element of similarity to God the creator that is most manifest of all is incorruptibility and indestructibility. Yet I do not think that the creature would ever be sufficient of itself to be able to have this property, at least according to its own nature. How could those of the earth be shown to have the boast of incorruptibility in their own nature, unless they have been enriched with this blessing by God, who is by nature incorruptible and indestructible and always the same, just as they have been enriched with other blessings? "For what do you have that you did not receive?"[273] the divinely inspired Paul asks us truthfully and for very good reason. With the intent that what was brought from nonexistence into being may not, by falling back into its original condition, pass into nonexistence again but rather be preserved continually—since this was the aim of the creator—God makes it a partaker of his own nature. "God breathed into his face the breath of life,"[274] that is, the Spirit of the Son, since he is life along with the Father, holding all things in existence. The beings that are receptive of life "move and live" in him, as Paul says.[275]

Let none of us catechize falsely on this point,[276] thinking that we said that the divine breath has become the soul of the living creature. We deny this, guided to the truth of the matter by an argument like the following. If any think that the divine breath has become a soul, let them tell us whether **[485]** it at that time turned aside from its own nature and became a soul, or it remained in the identity of its own nature. If they say that it has in any way changed and transgressed the law of its own nature, they will be convicted of blasphemy, since they will obviously be claiming that the nature that is immutable and always the same is actually mutable. But if it did not change at all, but remained what it always was, the breath of God proceeding from him, how did it degenerate into sin and become susceptible to so many different kinds of passion? After all, they would certainly not say that it is in any way possible for the divine nature to be capable of sin.

Without employing lengthy proofs on this matter, we will make another pass at the explanation that this passage deserves. I mean that we must take it up again and say that I do not think that any right-minded person would think that the divine breath, which proceeds from the divine nature, became the soul of the living creature. Rather, after the creature was ensouled, or rather after it arrived at the condition of its complete nature through both (I mean soul and body), then, like a stamp of his own nature, the creator fixed upon it the

[270]Heb 2:14.
[271]Wis 1:14.
[272]Col 3:10.
[273]1 Cor 4:7.
[274]Gen 2:7.
[275]Acts 17:28.
[276]Here Cyril explicitly refers to his readers as catechists. See the discussion of Cyril's intended audience on pp. xvii-xix.

Holy Spirit, that is, the breath of life, through which he shaped it into its archetypal beauty. It was completed in the image of its creator and made constant in every form of virtue by the power of the Holy Spirit, who dwelt in it. But since it was capable of free choice and entrusted with the reins of its own will—that too is part of the image, since God has control over his own will—it turned and fell. And we will let the Scripture teach how this happened, since its account of this is clear. God the Father in Christ wanted to return human nature to its original condition and undertook to do so. He willed it, and he accomplished it.

It is fitting, then, to examine how it happened. There was no other way for [**486**] humanity, being of a perishable nature, to escape death except to be returned to that original grace and to participate once again in God, who holds all things in existence and who gives life through the Son in the Spirit. So he came to share in flesh and blood, that is, he became a human being, even though the only begotten Word of the Father is life by nature and is begotten of him who is life by nature, that is, God the Father. He did this so that by ineffably and indescribably uniting himself to the flesh that was perishing (at least as far as its own nature is concerned) as only he knew how to do, he might raise it to his own life and make it a partaker of God the Father through himself. He is the "mediator between God and humanity," as it is written.[277] As God and from God, he is naturally joined to God the Father. And as a human being, he is joined to humanity, having the Father in himself and himself being in the Father. He is the imprint and radiance of his hypostasis,[278] not distinct from the essence of which he is the imprint and from which he proceeds as radiance, but being in it and having it in him. And he likewise has us in himself in that he bore our nature, and our body is called the body of the Word. "The Word became flesh," as John says.[279] He bore our nature and thus fashioned it in conformity with his life. And he himself is in us, since we have all become partakers in him, and we have him in ourselves through the Spirit. Therefore, we have become partakers in the divine nature and we are called children, since we have the Father himself in us through the Son. Paul testifies to this when he says, "Because you are children, God sent the Spirit of his Son into your heart, crying, 'Abba! Father!'"[280] After all, the Spirit of the Son is no different [**487**] than the Son, at least when it comes to the way they are identical (I mean their identical nature).

Since that is the outcome of our discussion on these matters, come, let us take the meaning of what has been said and apply it to the Savior's words. "On that day," he says, "you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you." I myself live, he says,[281] since I am life by nature, and I have made my temple alive as well. And when you see yourselves living like me, though you are of a corruptible nature, then "you will know" with utter clarity that I, being life by nature, have joined you through myself to God the Father, who is also himself life by nature, thus putting you in communion, as it were, and making you partakers of his incorruptibility. I am naturally in the Father, since I am the fruit of his essence and a genuine offspring, and I am and have come from him as life from life. Furthermore, "you are in me and I in you" in that I have appeared as a human being, and I have made you share in the divine nature by causing my Spirit to dwell in you. Christ is in us through the Spirit, converting what is perishable by nature into incorruptibility and

[277]1 Tim 2:5.
[278]Heb 1:3.
[279]Jn 1:14.
[280]Gal 4:6.
[281]Jn 14:19.

transferring it from dying to not dying. That is why Paul says, "He who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit that dwells in you."[282] Though the Spirit proceeds from the Father, he nevertheless comes through the Son and is his own, since all things are through the Son from the Father. The divine psalmist bears witness that we are refashioned through the Spirit into eternal life when he cries out to the God of all, "When you open your hand, all things will be filled with goodness, but when you turn your face away, they will be dismayed. You will take away their breath, and they will fail **[488]** and return to their dust. You will send forth your Spirit, and they will be created. And you will renew the face of the earth."[283] Do you hear how Adam's transgression and his "turning away," as it were, from the divine commands troubled our human nature and made it return to its own earth? But when God sent out his Spirit and made us partakers in his own nature and through that Spirit renewed the face of the earth, we were transformed to "newness of life,"[284] casting off the decay that comes from sin and once again laying hold of eternal life through the grace and love of our Lord Jesus Christ. Through him and with him be glory to God the Father with the Holy Spirit forever. Amen.

THE END OF THE NINTH BOOK **[489]**

[282]Rom 8:11.

[283]Ps 104:28-30 (Ps 103:28-30 LXX).

[284]Rom 6:4.

Chapters in Book Ten

1. The Son is in no way less than God the Father but equal and similar to him in nature; on the words, "If you loved me, you would rejoice that I am going to the Father, because the Father is greater than I."
2. The Son is of the same substance as God the Father, not of a different or foreign nature as some twisted people say; on the words, "I am the vine, you are the branches, and my Father is the vinedresser." **[491]**

OUR FATHER AMONG THE SAINTS
CYRIL
ARCHBISHOP OF ALEXANDRIA
ON THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN

BOOK TEN

14:21 "They who have my commandments and keep them are those who love me; and those who love me will be loved by my Father, and I will love them and reveal myself in them."

He is saying that the revelation of the mystery in us will be clearer, particularly when we behold ourselves living in accordance with his likeness. I live, he says, and you also will live.[1] The mind of each one is fully assured, as it were, not only by what they heard and have believed but rather by what they will possess when they have reached the completion of the promise. Experience is more powerful than words in its ability to convince and give assurance. Lest we imagine that the power to enjoy such an awe-inspiring gift is simply open to everyone, even if they may not be good and illumined by the fear of God, he immediately joins his statement with the persons who love him. Thus he has shown clearly that **[492]** no one else will be able to choose such an incomparable grace except those who have chosen to live a virtuous life. These would be the ones who love him. Even though it happens to be the case that Christ raises the bodies of all (since both the wicked and the good will be raised), nevertheless the resurrection to glory or enjoyment will not be given to all without distinction. It is clear that some receive resurrection only for punishment and will have a life worse than any death, while others will spend ages in blessedness and will truly live a desirable and holy life in Christ. Christ makes it plain that those who are going to be sent away from him with a verdict of punishment at the time of the judgment will remain without a taste of the blessed life, even though they obtain the general resurrection along with the saints: "Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not believe the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God will remain on them."[2] Understand that though all people, both the wicked and the good, await the resurrection, he says that those who are guilty of the charge of unbelief will not so much as see life. He is saying that life is surely not resurrection alone, but I think (for good reason) it is that resurrection that consists of rest and glory and enjoyment—spiritual enjoyment, that is, not other kinds. The spiritual mode of enjoyment is the perfect knowledge of God and the exact revelation of the mystery of Christ, not in a mirror and an enigma—as revelation now

[1]Cf. Jn 14:19.

[2]Jn 3:36.

shows us the dim traces of what we seek—but a complete revelation that is manifested and shines purely in us and makes our knowledge quite complete. "For the partial will come to an end," as Paul says.[3]

Our Lord Jesus Christ, then, teaches us that the promise of revelation is for those who choose to love him and who put into practice his divine preaching, [**493**] and that is more fitting for them or rather belongs to them, and not to those who think and do the opposite. He teaches this by adding, to our great profit, the statement, "They who have my commandments and keep them are those who love me." One has his "commandments" when one has received the faith and through a good memory has brought into one's mind the unpolluted and distinct teaching of the gospel commands. And one fulfills them by putting them into practice and by being eager to distinguish oneself by the glory of one's deeds. Those, therefore, who are illustrious in faith and action are perfect and fully equipped for godliness. They have witnesses to their holiness, which is patterned after Christ. "Let every matter be established by the mouth of two or three witnesses," as it is written.[4] God the Father will love such people for good reason, and the Son will love them no less. Just as he has the same substance, so also he has the same will as the one who begat him. Because there is one essence, there is indeed one will and one goal in every matter. There is no disagreement or division into different wills. To those deemed worthy of the divine love, he promises that he will give a glorious reward and that he will crown them with unimaginable gifts. "I will reveal myself in them," he says. To the pure, the discourse on the vision of God will be clear. Christ shines in them (namely through his Spirit), guiding them with his light into everything they need, unveiling himself and making himself visible by a certain ineffable spiritual torchlight. Those who have made their choice once and for all are blessed and worthy of imitation. It seems to me that the prophet David is this kind of person when he says, "I will hear what God the Lord will say in me."[5] And so is the divine apostle when he writes to us, "Since you desire proof of Christ speaking in me."[6] He speaks of himself in the saints through the Spirit, and [**494**] and he reveals other mysteries as well. That is why the saints, who know these things well, sometimes say, "God has revealed to us through the Spirit,"[7] and at other times say, "But we have the mind of Christ,"[8] referring to his Spirit as his "mind."

14:22 Judas (not Iscariot) said to him, "Lord, what has happened that you will reveal yourself to us, and not to the world?"

The disciple proceeds to ask this question out of love, but he does not quite understand the Savior's statement. Our Lord Jesus Christ promises a special knowledge to the saints that is not like that given to others. The very distinct and clear marks of the divine mysteries shine forth in the saints. For others, however, their knowledge is found in simple reasoning. They have not yet arrived at such purity of heart that they are able, by the gift of the Spirit, to choose to understand matters beyond thought. Their reasoning consists only in the fact that they happen to know that Christ is God and truly the Son of God by nature. Although there is this great difference between them, which vastly separates the knowledge of the common people from that found in the saints, the disciple makes no distinction and proceeds to ask why Jesus is not going to reveal himself to everyone in the

[3] 1 Cor 13:10.
[4] 2 Cor 13:1; Deut 19:15.
[5] Ps 85:8 (Ps 84:9 LXX).
[6] 2 Cor 13:3.
[7] 1 Cor 2:10.
[8] 1 Cor 2:16.

world. And when the disciple cries out, "What has happened?" he seems to want to suggest something like this: The aim, he says, of your coming to us, O Lord, is not that you may be known partially, to some and not to others. We heard in the prophets that "all flesh will see the salvation of God."[9] Yes, and you yourself raised your voice and cried, "Rejoice and be glad, daughter of Zion! Behold, I am coming and I will tabernacle in your midst, says the Lord, and many nations will flee to the **[495]** Lord on that day, and they will be his people."[10] And while you were with us and spent time with us, we heard your voice with our own ears when you said to us, "When I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw all people to myself."[11] And you also said to the Jews themselves, "I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold. I must bring them also. And there will be one flock, one shepherd."[12] Now since the expectation is raised that your grace will be for all people and that everyone will be gathered to the knowledge of God, and since you yourself promised us this explicitly—"what has happened?" To where, he says, has the aim of the promise shifted and diverted? Why do you not reveal yourself to everyone in the world but only to us? I think the meaning of the disciple's words is nothing other than this. And we would do well to show what it was that led him away from a true understanding.

Our Lord Jesus Christ said, "In a little while, the world will no longer see me, but you will see me."[13] Now it is certainly very clear that "world" in this statement does not mean those who are in this life or who live on the earth, since everyone, both the wicked and the good, are in the world in that sense. Rather, he used the term *world* of those who have been persuaded to set their mind on earthly matters and to subject their thoughts to the yoke of the vanity of the world. The disciple, then, not quite understanding this, thought that he was saying that he would escape the eye (I mean the inner, hidden eye) of all other people who dwell in this earthly region and would be completely unseen, known to no one except the disciples alone. This was the reason for his ignorance. If **[496]** he had understood at first, he would not have proceeded to ask, "What has happened that you will reveal yourself to us, and not to the world?" This meaning was suggested to him because he understood the term *world* in its normal sense as most people use it. It is common for us to use the term *world*, in its well-worn and obvious sense, to refer to the inhabitants of the entire world, just as one might use the term *city* to refer to the inhabitants of an entire city. Still the disciple is worthy of our imitation, even when he says this. See how he wants the Savior's glory to shine all over the world like the sun, though if he had taken thought for himself alone, he could have enjoyed blessings exclusive to himself, since he had the promise of knowledge. But it was not enough to gratify him that the blessing would be granted to him personally, as it were. Since he loved both God and his brother, he wanted the Savior's glory to be spread and his grace to be offered in common to his brothers. After all, what could rival being called to an in-depth knowledge of God?

14:23 Jesus answered and said to him, "Those who love me will keep my word, and my Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them."

When he sees that the disciple does not completely understand, he goes back to what he said at first and teaches clearly that he will reveal himself to those who are genuine. Not only will he give them mental knowledge, but the manner of revelation will be unique to them and not shared by others. The common

[9]Is 40:5.
[10]Zech 2:10-11.
[11]Jn 12:32.
[12]Jn 10:16.
[13]Jn 14:19.

people and those who have fled from the deception of idols, for example, have been called to the knowledge of him who is God by nature, but their faith consists of simple and unquestioned axioms. They have learned, for example, to think that "there is no idol in the world,"[14] but there is only one who is God by nature. [**497**] Those whose minds are bright with every virtue, however, and who are already able and fit to learn the divine and hidden mysteries, will receive the torch of the Spirit and behold with the eyes of their mind the Lord who has taken up residence in them. Therefore, the knowledge of the saints is not common to all, but it is something special, distinct and very different.

Now Christ helps us with every word and act. First, he defines precisely who it is who loves him. It seems to me (and rightly so) that this shows that receiving the power of grace is not given to everyone but to those who are shown to have the boast of a genuine relationship with him through the keeping of his commandments.

Next he explains in what way he will shine on them and how he will dwell in them. "My Father will love them," he says. Whoever has honored, by obedience to the Son, the begetter from whom he comes will possess love as a fruit of his action. Next he clearly sets down what the result of this will be and what profit that person will obtain. "We will come to them," he says, "I and my Father, and make our home with them." Since Christ our Savior dwells in us through the Holy Spirit, the one who begat him will surely be there as well. After all, the Spirit of Christ is also the Spirit of the Father himself. For example, the divinely inspired Paul says in one place that the Spirit belongs to the Father but in another that the Spirit belongs to the Son. He is not making contradictory statements but is telling the truth in each one, since that is how it is by nature. He says to some, "He who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit that dwells in you."[15] Then again, "Because you are children, God sent the Spirit of his Son into your heart, [**498**] crying, 'Abba! Father!'"[16] Do you see how the same Spirit is both of the Father and of the Son?[17] Since the Only Begotten dwells in our heart, the Father is not absent. The Son has the one who begat him in himself since he is of one essence with him, and he himself is in the Father by nature.

This, then, is the incontrovertible statement and definition of the faith. And I would gladly question those who, out of great ignorance, have chosen to think otherwise on this point, arming their tongue against the glory of the Spirit. What could they answer when we say to them: If the Spirit is created and foreign to the essence of God, as you think, how could God dwell in us through him? How could one who receives the Spirit participate in God? If it is possible to partake in the divine and ineffable nature through any originate essence at all, what would prevent God the Father from thrusting the Spirit aside and dwelling in us and sanctifying us through any other creature he might wish? But that is impossible. No one could become a partaker of him who is by nature God through anything else but the Spirit. Therefore, the Spirit is God and from God, not numbered among originate beings as some think.

We must examine the following as well. That which participates in something that is greater in essence and of a different nature than it is must be by nature different than what it participates in. So if the Spirit is created or made, what then will the creature participate in? Surely not itself! In that case, being a creature is common to both. As it is, however, since we are created and originate by

[14] 1 Cor 8:4.

[15] Rom 8:11.

[16] Gal 4:6.

[17] On the *filioque* see above, p. 178 n. 223.

nature, we participate in the Spirit as one who is different than we are by nature. And if this is [**499**] true (and it is true), the Spirit is God and from God, just as we said. Nothing that exists will escape the classification of being created except only the one who is by nature God, from whom the Holy Spirit ineffably proceeds and dwells in us, just as the Father from whom he comes. The Spirit is an attribute of his essence and is the quality, as it were, of his holiness.

So that is what I have to say against them. Now I must say something against the Anomoeans and those who are skilled at fighting against the Son, who are sick with a madness that is a sister and neighbor to what we just described.[18] "Those who love me will keep my word, and my Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them." What will you say, my noble friends, if anyone wants to inquire and learn from you whether we have two gods dwelling in us, the Father and the Son, or whether one God is understood to be and truly is in us? If the Son is completely different by nature and understood to be in some nature of his own, would we not have to believe that there is a pair of gods in us when we keep his commands? And if we are called temples not of two but of one God when the Father and the Son take up residence in us, what explanation can you give that contracts the two into a unity in us, since an essential unity is out of the question, at least in your deranged understanding? Either that, or you must say that Christ has lied to us and that only the Father dwells in us through the Spirit. Or Christ dwells in us, and the Father is absent. But that is absurd. There is one God in us when we receive both. The Only Begotten, then, is clearly not of a different substance than his Father but is of him and in him, just as the radiance of light is in the light. The true meaning of the mystery would be nothing other than this. [**500**] The divinely inspired Paul, for example, called us temples not of two gods but of one and the same God. "Do you not know," he says, "that you are the temple of God and that God's Spirit dwells in you?"[19] Notice that he has brought the Father and the Son together into an identity of essence when he says that we have been made temples not of "gods" but of "God." Why then do you fend off the power of the truth with empty arguments and sow the poison of your blasphemy in those who habitually launch irrational attacks against the holy and divine Scriptures?

14:24 "Whoever does not love me does not keep my words."[20]

Once he has rightly and precisely identified those who love him and what blessings they will share, he immediately proceeds to others who have not yet chosen to love him. They will not be keepers, he says, of my words. This is the meaning of "he will not keep my word," which is spoken as if it were about one person, even though it has a broad and general significance. And what he says follows very well from what precedes. If the clear proof of love for him is keeping his commands or his word, the opposite surely also would be true. The proof of refusing to love him is to pay no attention to his command and to thrust aside what he has ordered as if it came from those who habitually do evil. Just as he promised that he would dwell together with God the Father in those who keep his law, in the same way, I think, he will completely depart and withdraw from those who do not. Then Solomon will be telling the truth when he says, "Wisdom will

[18]The Anomoeans were a group of radical Arians who held that the Son is unlike (ἀνόμοιος) the Father. Eunomius, Cyril's principal opponent in the *Commentary on John*, was a leading proponent of this position.

[19]1 Cor 3:16.

[20]Pusey's Greek text has λόγους (words), but when Cyril refers to the verse in the body of his commentary, he has the singular form λόγον (word).

not enter a deceitful soul, or dwell in a body enslaved to sin."[21] Indeed, you will find that this is the case even among us. **[501]** Does not everyone gain their reputation by spending time with those of like mind, who choose the same manner of life, rather than with others? "Every creature loves its like," as it is written, "and people stick close to those like themselves."[22] If it seems desirable even among ourselves to be with those of similar habits, how can we not conclude that this is the case with God? Since he is good by nature, and he is the source and genesis of all virtue, he does not dwell in those who love wickedness but in those who practice virtue. He avoids the impure, and for good reason. Just as we ourselves are eager to rid our houses of filth and stench, if there is any, and refuse to live in them, will not our pure and all-holy God even more avoid the polluted soul and be disgusted by the heart sunk in the mire of sin? There is no doubt. The main point of our contemplation will teach you that whoever does not keep his command will be in precisely this position, since that person is impure and loves filth. After all, the origin of sin is found in not keeping the divine commands.

In the same way as the lack of light leads to its opposite (I mean, shadow), choosing not to practice virtue leads to the origin of wickedness. Though the underlying subject is one and the same, I do not think qualities that are distinct from each other could ever come together into an identity, according to the law of opposites. Evil and virtue are distinct and very far removed as opposite qualities of each other, or else how could one speak without falling into error? Both could not belong to any one person among us at the same time and be fulfilled in action. A person is either wicked **[502]** or good, even though they may not have reached the pinnacle of wickedness or goodness. When one prevails in us, the other (that is, the opposite) will surely be weak. If the form of virtue consists of keeping the commands, how could it not be crystal clear that the origin of evil consists of not keeping them? Just as those who keep the commandments will have the Father and the Son in themselves, which is the origin and basis of all joy and glory, so also those who do not keep the commandments do not at all participate in the divine and ineffable nature, which means they do not enjoy any blessings at all. So if anyone thinks it is good and desirable to partake in the divine nature and to have the God and Father of the universe indwelling and abiding in the shrine of their heart through the Son in the Spirit, let them clean out their soul and wash away the stain of wickedness by any means possible, or rather by every good work. Then they will truly be called a temple of God, and God will rest and abide in them, as it is written.[23] Then it will not be with them as it was with the lawyer mentioned in the Gospels, who did not wait for the grace of the Savior but, self-called, said that he would follow. To seize such a remarkable honor, he says, "Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go."[24] And what did the Lord say to him in a parable and an enigma? "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head."[25] By "foxes" and "birds of the air" he means the wicked and unclean demons and the spirits of the world and of the air, who enter and inhabit the heart of the pleasure seekers, fulfilling their own lusts and so cramping the miserable souls who receive them that God finds no place **[503]** at all to rest in them. That is what "lay his head" means.

Therefore, let us cleanse our heart from every defilement. This—this is how God will dwell in us, and make us greater than all the malice of the devil, and make us happy and

[21]Wis 1:4.
[22]Sir 13:15-16.
[23]Jn 14:23.
[24]Mt 8:19.
[25]Mt 8:20.

blessed, and render us partakers of his divine and ineffable nature.

"And the word that you hear is not mine but is from the Father who sent me."
He once more lays out what is necessary to summon them to right thinking. And once more he presents an explanation that would give them a better instructed mind to gain a good understanding of the depth of the mystery. He strengthens the mind of his hearers so that they may not be allured by the ignorance of the Jews and, in their desire to bring their ideas into conformity with the suppositions of the Jews, dishonor the holy teaching of the gospel. What I want to say is clearly expressed by the following. Since the law was given as a shadow[26] and type "until the time comes to set things right,"[27] as Paul says, "it was our pedagogue to bring us to Christ,"[28] and it provided preliminary training, as it were, for godly virtue. So anyone who says that the law given through Moses was a preparatory exercise for the truth and for worship in the Spirit would not be off the mark. That is why the law makes nothing perfect; rather our Lord Jesus Christ perfects a person for godliness. He has clearly revealed to us no longer images of the realities, but the truth itself, and he inscribes the form of virtue no longer in types and outlines, which is what Moses did, but sets it up clearly and nakedly, as it were. The lesson of Christ's words, then, was a transferal and transformation of types into truth. **[504]** Since the truth was already shining, it was superfluous for the shadow to prevail any longer. Christ commanded those who came to him through faith no longer to live according to the types of the law. This upset the Jews greatly, and they thought that Christ came to abolish the ancient law, even though they heard him crying out explicitly, "I have not come to abolish the law, but to fulfill it. I tell you, not one jot or tittle will pass away from the law until all things have been accomplished."[29] After all, the true virtue, introduced by the law of Christ, fulfills the shadow of the law, as we have just said. Since they have sunk into disobedience in their rash anger and pursued a zeal for the law, though not according to knowledge,[30] they thought themselves to be advocating for the law by rejecting the teachings of Christ. Therefore, lest he appear to give laws that are new or idiosyncratic and opposed to the will of God the Father, he beneficially and necessarily adds, "The word that you hear is not mine but is from the Father who sent me."

Let none who come to me through faith imagine, he says, that I have made any statement that is not in harmony with God the Father. The gospel proclamation is his and no one else's. He was not embarrassed, as it were, at the older laws, nor was a better command just now discovered. Rather, at the proper time, the type was transformed into truth. He spoke those things to the ancients through me at that time, and now he speaks these to you. I am, after all, the living Word who interprets the ineffable will of God the Father. That is why I am also called the "angel of the great counsel."[31]

Either we will understand the statement in this way (I mean the statement, "The word that you hear is not mine but is from the Father who sent me"), or we will understand it in another way. He is saying that his word is from God the Father so that those who keep it **[505]** may know that they have honored God when they believe the words that came from him, while those who fall into the opposite way and who do not hesitate to despise his command by their disobedience are sinning against the very

[26]Heb 10:1.
[27]Heb 9:10.
[28]Gal 3:24.
[29]Mt 5:17-18.
[30]Cf. Rom 10:2.
[31]Is 9:6 (Is 9:5 LXX).

nature of the king of all. There were two ways to defend the mind of his hearers. Either the will to honor God would surely turn them to obedience, or the fear of offending him would have the same effect. The calculation of what is useful and expedient takes both considerations into account. Now when he says, "The word is not mine," he is surely not directing us away from his own person, since he is the Word and God. Though he still has the form of a servant and appears in human fashion and is truly like us when he says these things, he does not want his word to be understood as human but as truly divine and royal. So he appropriately transfers it to the person of the Father so that he does not divide himself and admit the conception of two sons, since the Son is one both before and after the incarnation. Christ is one and not two, as some claim. The Father's Word, who is God, has become flesh, as John says.[32] He was not transformed into flesh, but he made the temple from the holy virgin into his own flesh. So in order that we may not think that his word is human or separate the gospel teaching from the divine nature, but believe that it is from the God of all, he quite rightly and in accordance with the *oikonomia* (since he appears in human form) ascribes his word to the divine nature. He ascribes it to the divine nature in the person of God the Father, from whom and in whom he is by nature, as his radiance and Word and the imprint of his hypostasis.[33] [**506**]

14:25-26 "I have said these things to you while I am still with you. But the Paraclete, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you."

This statement has a human quality and is not completely exempt from our limitations, as far as the meaning that is appropriate to the passage is concerned. When is Christ not with us, someone might reasonably ask, at least according to the power of his divinity? He fills all things and is absent from nothing at all. He encompasses earth and heaven with his unspeakable power and does not leave the depth of the abyss. After all, where is God not present? Therefore, when he says, "I have said these things to you while I am still with you," we will understand it according to his humanity. Since he was about to vanish from our sight (according to the flesh, I mean), he says this once he has prepared for his departure into heaven.

He says that the most perfect and precise revelation of the mystery to us will take place through the Paraclete, that is, the Holy Spirit sent from the Father in his name (I mean the Son's name). His Spirit is in us functioning as Christ. That is why he says, "He will teach you all that I have said to you." Since he is the Spirit of Christ and the mind of Christ, as it is written[34]—which is nothing other than him, at least when it comes to the identity of nature—even though he is understood to exist and does exist personally, he knows all that is in him. And Paul will be our witness when he says, "Who knows what belongs to a human being except the human spirit within? So also no one knows what belongs to God except the Spirit of God."[35] Therefore, he announces all things to us, since he knows what is in the will of the Only Begotten, and he has this knowledge not by learning it. So that he may not seem to hold the rank of a minister who transmits the words of someone else, [**507**] he reveals the divine mysteries to the saints as Christ's Spirit, as we just said, who knows without being taught everything that is from him and in him, just as the human mind of course knows everything that is in the person

[32]Jn 1:14.
[33]Heb 1:3.
[34]1 Cor 2:16.
[35]1 Cor 2:11.

and ministers externally by the spoken word,[36] expressing the desires of the soul whose mind it is. It is mentally viewed and called something else other than the soul, but it is no different in nature. Rather, it is a complementary part of the whole that is both in the soul and believed to spring from it. Now the divine and ineffable nature transcends this, since the power of every illustration is small, even if it deals with subtle concepts. Therefore, perfect knowledge is begotten in the saints through the Spirit. For example, the divinely inspired Paul writes to certain people, "I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints. I do not cease to give thanks for you as I remember you in my prayers. I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation as you come to know him, so that, with the eyes of your heart enlightened, you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance among the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power for us who believe, according to the work which he brought about in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the age to come."[37] In the revelation of these matters, ineffably accomplished through the Spirit in us, we see the depth of the *oikonomia* with the flesh and the meaning of the hidden mystery. **[508]** Paul makes it just as clear to us that the Spirit of Christ, dwelling in the saints, brings about the presence and power of Christ himself and teaches everything that he has spoken to us when he says, "For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth takes its name. I pray that, according to the riches of his glory, he may grant that you may be strengthened in your inner being with power through his Spirit, and that Christ may dwell in your heart through faith, as you are being rooted and grounded in love. I pray that you may have the power to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God."[38]

We must note that when he says that all things will be revealed to the saints through the Spirit, he is not giving them a different teacher. Do not think that. He is presenting himself through the Spirit since he is no longer visible to fleshly eyes, but he is still beheld in a God-befitting way by the spiritual eyes of the heart.

14:27 "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your heart be troubled, and do not let it be afraid."

He reminds the holy apostles of his ascension into heaven and prepares them for the knowledge that they will then be left alone by saying, "I have said these things to you while I am still with you."[39] Since he is God by nature, he understands very well that his statement gave them no small alarm and that they were terribly troubled. By burdening them with a heavy load of grief, he clouded the mind of each one of them. What could be harder to bear than their grief? And what could be so burdensome as to be deprived of their highest delight and **[509]** to undergo the unexpected loss of what was most dear to them? He therefore calms them when they are troubled by grief and fear. The basis and root of their grief was quite legitimate: the fact that he was

[36]λόγος προφορικός. This is a technical Stoic term for the spoken word as opposed to the thought in the mind (λόγος ἐνδιάθετος) that is expressed by the spoken word.
[37]Eph 1:15-21.
[38]Eph 3:14-19.
[39]Jn 14:25.

about to depart from them and return to the Father. He considered their suspicion that they would suffer all kinds of trials to be the mother of their grief—and rightly so, since he who was strong to save was no longer present, at least to the clear sight of the body. And how does he settle them down? In what way does he produce in them the brightness of a cheerful heart? How is their mind quieted once again into a divine calm? "I give you peace," he says, "and I leave you my peace." I have often told you, he says, that "I will not leave you as orphans."[40] You will not live on earth alone, bereft and stripped of your helper. I will be with you and, though absent in the body, I will build you up with my favor as God, and I will place you above all trouble, and no one will surpass you in boldness. Every fear will dwindle away, and all cowardice will get out of your way. Divine power will rise up within you, leading you with a peaceful mind and a calm heart to revelation that surpasses human understanding. Now he does not simply say, "I give you peace," but, "my peace." Clearly, he is saying nothing other than, "I will supply the Spirit, and I will be with those who receive him through me."

I do not think it will require a long discourse to provide proof and assurance that the peace of Christ is his Spirit. Nevertheless, I suppose it is necessary to state the following: If Christ himself is peace in heaven and on earth, how could it not be clear to everyone that, as we said, his peace is surely his Spirit? For example, the divinely inspired Paul said to certain people, "And the peace of God which surpasses every mind will guard your heart and your mind in Christ Jesus."[41] Surely it is correct to think that he is not talking about peace in the common sense of the word. **[510]** The condition of not wanting to war and fight, insofar as it exists in our own inclinations and in the will itself, possesses and brings about peace. But we will never think that peace, in this sense, is something hypostatic that exists personally. No, we should think of it as existing in the disposition of those who love it. How then could we understand such a peace to surpass every mind? That which nowhere and in no way exists on its own—how could it be considered better and nobler than human beings, for example, or angels, or beings thought to be higher still? After all, we say that these too are "mind." Therefore, the peace that is beyond principalities, beyond authorities, beyond thrones and dominions, and beyond every mind is the Spirit of Christ, by which the Son has reconciled all things to God the Father by willing the things that are his and by wishing to think and do them, and by not going off in another direction to apostasy by turning aside toward sin. It is no trouble and it is not confusing to take up the argument on this point. Since the Son is life by nature and wisdom and power, his Spirit is called and is the Spirit of life and of wisdom and of power. In the same way, since he alone is peace, truly and strictly speaking, his Spirit would reasonably be understood as and be called "peace," just like he is. That is why, ascribing his peace (that is, his Spirit) specifically to his own nature, he says of him, "My peace I leave you." And you will easily understand that the Spirit of Christ was called this even among the holy prophets when you learn this from the voice of Isaiah: "O Lord our God," he says, "give us peace, for you have given us all things."[42] Since the law has made nothing perfect and its righteousness is not sufficient **[511]** to bring a person to full godliness, he asks for the divine Spirit to be given, through whom we have been reconciled to God the Father and called to friendship with him, even though we were previously made fugitives by the sin that ruled over us. Therefore, "give us

[40]Jn 14:18.
[41]Phil 4:7.
[42]Is 26:12.

your peace, O Lord," he says, "for you have given us all things." What he intends to communicate, I say, is something like this: Give us peace, O Lord, he says. Then we will confess that we have everything, and no blessing will be found lacking for a person once they have been brought to the fullness of Christ. After all, the fulfillment of every blessing is God dwelling in us through the Spirit. Since the Spirit is fully sufficient to allay all troubles of the mind and to overcome all cowardice in us, he is promising to give us the provisions, as it were, that we need for courage and steadfastness when he says, "My peace I leave you. Do not let your heart be troubled, and do not let it be afraid."

14:28 "You heard that I said to you, 'I am going away, and I am coming to you.'"

You did not learn of my departure from someone else. You heard my words for yourselves. And what did I, who do not know how to lie, promise you? "I am going away, and I am coming to you." Now if my statement had threatened a departure and an eternal desertion that would leave you without comfort, you would quite likely be very upset at this, find it unbearable and sink into sheer despondency. But since I told you not only that I would go away but that I would return at the proper time, why, he says, do you let the cause of grief enter into your mind, but you slight the cause of joy by forgetfulness? Let that which can heal arise in you to combat what strikes you, and let the power of my comforting statement wrestle with the causes of grief. **[512]** It has been ordained for me to ascend to the Father, but I have promised that I will return again. And so he allays, then, the deep grief that he finds in the disciples. It is as if a fond and good father is forced by some important reason to take his children away from the woman who is holding them. When he sees the flood of tears from his children drenching their tender dear cheeks, he constantly brings up the good that will come from the departure and arms them, in a way, against their grief with the hope of pleasure. In the same way, our Lord Jesus Christ protects the soul of the saints from grief. He knew—he knew, since he was true God, that his abandonment of them would be excessively burdensome to them, though he was always with them through the Spirit. And this is a proof of their extreme love and holiness. After all, wanting to be with Christ—how is that not perfectly fitting for the saints? The admirable Paul, for example, has this same intention, since he says that it is better "to depart and be with Christ."[43] **[513]**

Chapter One

The Son is in no way less than God the Father but equal and similar to him in nature.

"If you loved me, you would rejoice that I am going to the Father, because my Father is greater than I."

He turns the occasion for grief into a reason for joy, and he explicitly rebukes them for not rejoicing at what now grieves them. By this he tries to teach them that those who practice sincere and true love for others must seek not only what is pleasant and pleasing to themselves but also what is profitable for those whom they love, when the opportunity calls for them to do this. That is why Paul writes, "Love is not boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way."[44] He also speaks to some who seek not their own advantage but that of others.[45] The work of true love is certainly not to be concerned only with what benefits us but also to pay attention to what benefits the neighbor. In this passage the Savior persuades his disciples to take this

[43]Phil 1:23.
[44]1 Cor 13:4-5.
[45]1 Cor 10:24.

to heart. So come, let us imprint the power of this thought in clear letters on our heart as on a tablet, and let us ascend from there to the mystery of Christ, since the type of lesser matters often enables us to reach subjects that we believe are beyond comparison. Thus, it was pleasant, for example, **[514]** for Paul's disciples to be with him always, but for Paul it was better "to depart and be with Christ," as he himself confirmed in his writings.[46] It was the task of those who chose to love him to be eager to put their love for him into action, and not to consider bearable only what was pleasant for them, but to consider the fact that it was better for their teacher that he go away, since he was eager to be with Christ.

Here you have a sketch of this idea in our affairs. Come then, let us fill in this sketch with the meaning of the mystery of Christ as with various colors, and let us now clearly show the truth. The Only Begotten, being in the form of God the Father and in equality with the Spirit, did not consider equality with God something to be exploited, but because of his love for us he emptied himself, taking on the form of a slave.[47] He underwent this to direct us all to the full knowledge of virtue, and through the incomparable brightness of his miracles to prepare us to behold the power and glory and exceeding authority that is in his divine nature. That is how it was possible to persuade those who had sunk to extreme ignorance to recover their understanding once again and to stop worshiping the creature rather than the creator and instead sign on with the one who is truly God by nature. The incarnate Only Begotten helped us in other ways as well. He overthrew the might of death, he destroyed the power of sin, and he gave us the ability to "tread on snakes and scorpions and over all the power of the enemy."[48] Therefore, it was quite reasonably pleasant and desirable beyond description to us and to the holy disciples to be with Christ always, who is the giver of such blessings to us, and to be ever present with him and in his company. **[515]**

But it was clearly not very beneficial to him to dwell so long in the form of humility, which he took on for our benefit because of his love for us, as we just said. Rather, it was necessary, when the *oikonomia* for us was suitably accomplished, for him to return to his own glory and to equality with God the Father, along with the flesh that he took on for us. That was the equality he thought was not robbery (since he could possess it as his own good attribute) when he descended into human humiliation. While he was still on earth, though he was true God and Lord of all, he was thought to be no greater than one of us, at least by those who did not know his glory. For example, he was struck, spat upon and crucified, and he endured the ridicule of the unholy Jews, who dared to say, "If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross and we will believe in you."[49] But when the mystery was accomplished on our behalf and he returned to God the Father in heaven (since the time of his humiliation was now past and the period of his voluntary emptying was now accomplished), he showed the powers above that he was God. Heaven did not fail to recognize the Lord of all as he ascended. The sentinels at the gates above received the instruction that the Lord of hosts was approaching, though he was flying up in the flesh. And the Spirit represented the opening of the gates in type when he said, "Lift up your gates, you princes! Be lifted up, you everlasting doors! And the king of glory will come in. The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle, the Lord of hosts—he is

[46]Phil 1:23.
[47]Phil 2:6-7.
[48]Lk 10:19.
[49]Mt 27:40; cf. Mt 27:42.

the king of glory."[50] "The manifold wisdom of God, which he carried out in Christ" was made known to "the rulers and authorities," as Paul says.[51] He ascended to the Father, who is considered greater than the Son in this respect: **[516]** he remained where he always was, while the Son underwent voluntary self-emptying and descended into the form of a slave and ascended again to his glory, hearing the words, "Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet."[52] So that he may not seem presumptuous and it may not appear that God the Father in heaven unwillingly sat the Son at his right hand, the Father himself is presented as saying, "Sit at my right hand." No one with any sense will say that the Father holds second place in honor just because he has the Son at his right hand. Rather, one should ponder and consider the following. It was fitting that not the Father, but the Son was at the right hand and held a place with no suspicion of inferiority. That is because, due to his voluntary emptying and subjection, he was classified among the inferior beings by those who could not understand the mystery concerning him. Therefore, he is at the right hand of the Father, against whom no such charge can be made, in order to preserve equal honor for the Son.

It was beneficial for us to bring up this explanation now, since the discussion is not unrelated to the passage. Now I will pick it up again and rewind the focus of our discussion all the way back to the beginning, as it were, and I will talk about how sweet and desirable and precious it is for us always to be with Christ our Savior, even though he emptied himself for us, as it is written,[53] and entered the form of a servant and the humiliation of human nature. After all, what is human nature compared to God? This humiliation was not beneficial for the Son himself, however. What was profitable for him was his ascension to the Father and his now-manifest return to his own glory and authority and God-befitting honor, no longer hidden in shadows. He sat at the Father's right hand with the Father himself willing this also, since he loves him as his own offspring **[517]** and the fruit of his essence. That is why the Son says, "If you loved me, you would rejoice that I am going to the Father, because my Father is greater than I." It was truly a sign of love for him that they do not grieve so much at the seeming abandonment and necessary departure but rather consider that he has gone to the glory that is fitting and due him and returned to his ancient honor, that is, honor that is clearly God-befitting. Indeed, the psalmist, speaking mysteries in the Spirit, says, "Clap your hands, all you peoples!"[54] Then he explains the reason for the festival and brings up the Savior's ascension into heaven: "God has gone up with a shout, the Lord with the sound of a trumpet!"[55] By "shout" and "trumpet," he means the loud and clear voice of the Spirit, when he commanded the heavenly hosts to open the gates, and he calls him the "Lord of hosts," as we said before. We will also find the chorus of the saints rejoicing greatly at this. It says somewhere, "The Lord reigns; let the earth rejoice,"[56] and somewhere else, "The Lord reigns; he has clothed himself with honor. The Lord has clothed and girded himself with strength."[57] He was a human being with us before his resurrection from the dead. When he ascended to the Father in heaven, then he clothed himself with his own honor and girded himself with the strength that was his from the beginning, since he sat down to rule with the Father. Therefore, it is right and fitting for those who love him to rejoice since he has gone

[50]Ps 24:7-8, 10 (Ps 23:7-8, 10 LXX).
[51]Eph 3:10-11.
[52]Ps 110:1 (Ps 109:1 LXX).
[53]Phil 2:7.
[54]Ps 47:1 (Ps 46:2 LXX).
[55]Ps 47:5 (Ps 46:6 LXX).
[56]Ps 97:1 (Ps 96:1 LXX).
[57]Ps 93:1 (Ps 92:1 LXX).

to the Father in heaven and taken up his own glory, once again to rule with him, just as it was in the beginning.

He says that the Father is "greater" not because he has sat down at the right hand as God but because **[518]** he was still with us, that is, in our condition. He says these things as one who still has the appearance of a slave since the time had not yet come for him to be reinstated. For example, when he endured the precious cross for us, the Jews brought him vinegar and gall when he was thirsty, and when he drank it, he said, "It is finished."[58] That was because the time of his humiliation was now complete, and he was crucified as a human being. He conquered the power of death, however, not as a human being, but now as God (I mean according to the working of his power and the glory and might of conquering, not according to the flesh). The Father is "greater," then, in the sense that the Son is still a slave and in our condition. After all, he says that the Father is his God, and he attributes this to his human form. If we believe that he emptied and humbled himself, how could it not be clear to all that he descended from some kind of superiority to inferiority, or rather from equality with the Father to inequality? The Father underwent none of this, but he remained and is in the condition in which he was from the beginning. Therefore, he is "greater" than the one who chose inferiority in the *oikonomia* and who remained in that state until he was restored to that condition (I mean the natural blessedness that he had in the beginning). Equality with the Father should rightly be considered his own natural place, as it were, which he did not think it robbery to have without interruption for our sakes.

Since we have given a long discourse on the equality of the Son with the Father in former books, perhaps it would now be fitting to proceed to the explanation of the next topics, leaving for now the long discussion on this matter. Since a certain ignorant heretic has received some marvelous knowledge of the Holy Scriptures from the Jews, and in an attempt to explain this passage **[519]** has committed to writing unbearable blasphemies against the Only Begotten, I deem it a mark of weakness and consider it very unbecoming of me to pass by in silence the terrible madness of the one I just mentioned. Therefore, I think that I must answer his argument and demonstrate clearly that his little words are worn-out old wives' tales. They are completely devoid of sound thought but contain the twists and turns of empty logic. Regarding the same text, I will read to you what he dared to write when he explained the meaning (so he thought) of this passage: "When he clearly proclaimed the Father greater than himself, he not only displayed his own proper prudence, but he also refuted the lie of those who think that he is in both." After he has thus shattered the opinion of Sabellius,[59] he makes a terrible and piercing attack (he thinks) on those who place the Son in equality with the Father, saying this: "Some have proceeded to such a point of madness that they cannot at all bear to say that the Father is greater than the divinity of the Son, but only that he seems greater in comparison with the flesh, even though this comparison cannot be observed since a comparison cannot be made between items that differ in kind. No one would ever say that a human being is wiser than a beast or that a horse runs faster than a tortoise. Rather, a human is more reasonable than another human, and a horse is faster than another horse. Since only items of the same kind admit of comparison with each other, they must confess that the Father is greater than the divinity itself of the Only Begotten. Those who fall into the contrary position by making a comparison with the flesh, as far is

[58]Jn 19:30.

[59]Sabellius taught that there was no real distinction between the Father and the Son.

in them lies, take away the honor of the Father."

Such is his nonsensical babbling. But watch how we will show that he is fighting against his own **[520]** position. He admits that the Son is maintaining proper prudence when he says, "The Father is greater than I." I am amazed that he does not take this to heart. What was it that induced the Son to reach for theology[60] at this point, even though no one (at least no sensible person) would fail to consider the appropriateness of the occasion for their speech and action? What was the need of such an inappropriate discussion of theology with the grieving disciples when he was about to depart from the world to God the Father? What kind of consolation could this matter bring them? Why does he practically rebuke them, saying, "If you loved me, you would rejoice that I am going to the Father, because the Father is greater than I"? Tell me, did this bring joy to the disciples or free them from the grief they felt from their love for God because he was going to the Father who was greater? What kind of comfort could anyone find in this? When Philip asked him and said, "Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied,"[61] then, since the time for a discourse on theology was at hand, he quite opportunely showed that the Father is in him and he, in turn, is in the Father and that he is in no way less than the Father, but he is distinguished by his perfect equality. He did this when he said, "Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and still you do not know me? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. Do you believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me?"[62] "I and the Father are one."[63] Now at that point he was rightly admired for weaving an appropriate discourse on these matters. But here, how is such a discussion appropriate? What kind of argumentation is at all admissible except that which aims to comfort the disciples in their grief? So the command to rejoice "because I am going to the Father" should be understood as a kind of medicine of consolation for them. Therefore, should it not be obvious from the facts of the matter, even to those with the dullest wit, **[521]** that since he was eager to return to his glory with the Father, he commanded those who loved him to rejoice at this, devising this admirable way of comforting them along with the others?

But now I will pass this by and not dwell for a long time on his demented ideas. Instead, I think I should proceed to the following. Perhaps our heretic thought that when we compare the flesh with the divine nature, we are using a completely useless standard, when we say that the Son emptied himself when he became a human being. But it is not so. How could it be? We are contrasting his divine glory with his measure as a servant and his servile honor when we say that the Son is less than the Father insofar as he became a human being and that he has been restored to his natural equality after his departure from here—not by being clothed with a new or imported or unaccustomed glory but by returning to that glory that he had with the Father in the beginning. Indeed, our divinely inspired instructor in the mysteries (I mean Paul) no longer clothes Christ with the humility that is fitting for human beings after his resurrection from the dead and ascension into heaven. He writes, "Even though we once knew Christ according to the flesh, now we know him no longer in that way."[64] And concerning himself, he says, "Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, not from human beings nor through a human

[60] In patristic authors, "theology" (θεολογία) refers to discourse about the divine nature itself, as opposed to "economy" (οἰκονομία), which refers to discourse about God's action in the world.

[61] Jn 14:8.

[62] Jn 14:9-10.

[63] Jn 10:30.

[64] 2 Cor 5:16.

being, but through Jesus Christ."[65] And yet, why is it that though he says that Christ will come again to us and transform "the body of our humiliation that it may be conformed to the body of his glory,"[66] he now denies it, saying, "not from human beings nor through a human being," though he was chosen as an apostle by Jesus Christ? Why does he say he does not know him at all according to the flesh? Did he then, tell me, "deny the Lord who bought him"?[67] God forbid! He is right-minded. **[522]** When the time of the perceived emptying or humiliation of the Only Begotten was fulfilled and came to an end, Paul was eager to proclaim him and know him not in his emptied condition but in his condition of being by nature God. Once it was known and accepted that he became a human being, the believers needed to be taught that he is God by nature, or rather that because he is God, he delights in discussions of his divinity more than other discussions.

I am amazed that our heretic does not blush when he says that since only things of the same kind "admit of comparison with each other, they must confess that the Father is greater than the divinity of the Only Begotten." Apparently he does not perceive that he is fighting against his own argument. Let him answer the following question, which we want to ask for the sake of edification: From what starting points would comparisons of items of the same class appropriately be made? Can we reasonably start with what they are according to the common definition of their nature, or with the qualities that are added or taken away from each, or that inhere or do not inhere in each? I will give an example, and I will provide it by drawing on what he himself gave us as an example. If anyone wants to compare a human with another human and examines the one common definition of their essence, that person would find no difference between them. A human will never differ from another human when it comes to being a rational animal, mortal, and capable of thought and reason. This is the one definition of essence that is in everyone. Nor does a horse differ from another horse when it comes to the same thing (I mean being a horse). But a human differs from another human with respect to some knowledge, like grammar or something else like that. However, these differences do not touch the essence but clearly proceed from quite another cause. So a horse is faster than another horse or has a bigger or smaller body, but **[523]** we will find that superiority or inferiority in these respects does not lie in the definition of essence. Otherwise items brought into comparison with each other would have no distinction between them. If a human, for example, is smaller or larger than another human insofar as they are human, how could such a person be thought of or spoken of at all? Therefore, natural properties exist in equal measure in every member of the same species. The qualities that inhere in them are clearly different and are in them as external accidents. Since, then, according to his own premise or claim, which I will deal with later, only items of the same kind will admit appropriate comparison with each other, let our heretic first admit that the Son is of the same kind as the Father, that is, of the same substance. After all, that is how you should understand "of the same kind," since he thinks that a human must be compared to a human, but a horse must be compared to a horse. Then let him teach us why the Son, who is compared to God the Father on the assumption that he is of the same kind as him, has some kind of inferiority. Where will we find this inferiority when one definition of essence should apply to members of the same class? It is clear that the definition of every essence is not perfect in some but imperfect in others, but it is one and

[65]Gal 1:1.
[66]Phil 3:21.
[67]2 Pet 2:1.

the same for all. We say, however, that accidents or qualities that are added in some way have different essences.

In order to clarify what I am saying, I will bring up the illustration that was used at the beginning. A human is no different from another human insofar as they are humans, but one is godly and another is evil; one is weak and maimed, while another is healthy and strong; one is vile and another is good. But when one examines carefully the causes of these conditions, one will not blame the definition of the essence, but one will attribute these causes to the passions of the body or the soul. Therefore, the definition of the divinity of the Father and the Son is one, in conception and reality [**524**] (since otherwise one could not help going astray from what is fitting). That is because, to use our heretic's own words for the argument, they are compared on the grounds that they are of the same kind. So let these wretched men teach us what they think made the Son inferior to God the Father. Was it suffering or laziness or anything else that is known to affect those beings who have an originate nature? Who would be so foolish and irrational as even to allow this blasphemy into their ears? Since he is of the same kind as the one who is God by nature, he himself is clearly also God by nature, since he is compared with the Father, and nothing will prevent him from being the same as his Father. So how is he inferior?

Since the enemy of the truth has propounded the most ignorant and irrational ideas on the basis of this passage and did not hesitate to affirm that "the Father is greater than the divinity of the Son," come let us make a brief defense of the *oikonomia* with the flesh and then, after separating it in our argumentation from the matter under discussion, let us compare the divinity of the Son with that of the Father, as they put it. But first let us ask the one who dares to say this to tell us whether God is God by nature, or whether something else is honored by the title of divinity, just as many in heaven are called "gods" and "lords," and so are many on earth.[68] When he maintains that the Son is glorified by the mere title of divinity but he is really not by nature what he is said to be, we who think rightly will meet their assertion by crying out: My good friend, if he is not God by nature, then we still worship the creature rather than the creator—and not only we who dwell on earth [**525**] but also the multitude of the holy angels. And we will accuse every saint for saying that he is true God by nature, and most of all we will find fault with the blessed John, who said of him, "We know that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding so that we may know the true God; and we are in his true Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life."[69] But if he is put to shame by the entirety of the divinely inspired Scripture and says that he is truly God and is convinced that it is so, yet he continues to hold that the Son is less than the Father in some respect, has he not introduced to us a new God, completely cut off from natural relationship with the Father, who is understood to be in some hypostasis[70] of his own, not being in the essence of God the Father? I think this fact is clear to everyone. If nothing is greater or less than itself but is understood to be greater in comparison with something that is less, or less in comparison with something that is greater, how is it not completely necessary to admit that there are two true Gods by nature, so that one may be understood as greater and the other as less than him? Thus the faith of the church is destroyed and overturned by their doctrine, since we will have not one God but two. So whose temples are we according to the Scriptures? Surely we are the temples of him who made his Spirit dwell in our souls. What then will we think when we find in the Holy Scriptures that the

[68] 1 Cor 8:5.

[69] 1 Jn 5:20.

[70] Here Cyril is using *hypostasis* (ὑπόστασις) as a synonym of *essence* (οὐσία).

Spirit is called not only the Spirit of the Father but also the Spirit of the Son? What should we think about that? Which two do we reject and call the other one God? But if we accept the idea that there are two Gods, one less and the other greater, we must say that both dwell in our souls through their Spirits, and then we will be caught being temples of Gods. Two Spirits would dwell in us, a greater and **[526]** a lesser, in proportion to the nature of those who gave them. Who can tolerate such vomit? Who cannot see that their argument is ignorant and ridiculous by examining the considerations we just presented?

But perhaps when our heretic is forced to admit that there are two Gods by nature, since one is greater and the other less, he will proceed to his usual worn-out explanation. I mean, he will say that the Son has a nature of his own that is not altogether separate from originate nature but does not completely fall short of the nature of God the Father. Those who do not hesitate to say openly that he is a creature and a handiwork take refuge in the technicalities of words such as these, imagining that they are making their blasphemy more refined, as it were. When they say that the Son is like this, that he is neither fully God by nature nor fully classified as a creature but is something in between, so that he falls short of the honor of God the Father and exceeds the glory of the creatures—first we will say that reason does not allow them simply to decree the position they want to take. Either let them prove it to us from the holy and divine Scriptures, or, since their argument has no support, let them be ashamed of presenting their own ideas as the faith.

But since it occurred to them to say this in their rash folly, I will proceed to their own presupposition and say again that if only items of the same kind properly admit "comparison with each other," and the Son has proved that he should be properly compared to God the Father (since he clearly says, "The Father is greater than I"), how is it not necessary to conclude that the Father is what you say the Son is? And what follows from this? Your whole position collapses. As long as you say the Father is greater than the Son **[527]** while creation is less than the Son, then the nature of the Only Begotten is in between, according to you. But if the nature of the Father is lessened to that of the Son, who is he in the middle of, since there is no longer one who is inferior and one who is superior? But if, as the Son says, he is compared with the Father as one member of the same class with another, how could there not be one definition of essence for both? If you refuse to confess that the Son is of the same substance with the Father but rather place him in an inferior position and debase the glory of the Father to that of him who, according to you, is lesser and inferior, do you not see blasphemy springing up like a thorn? Does not the "root of bitterness"[71] spring up and trouble the heart of those who think this way? Why then do you leave the straight path of truth and wander off into such strange arguments? Grant—grant, I say—equality with God the Father to him who, according to your own position, is of the same kind as him. Thus there will be one God, worshiped and glorified in the holy and consubstantial Trinity by us and the holy angels.

14:29 "And now I have told you this before it occurs, so that when it does occur, you may believe."

A prophecy about the future is a sure pledge of what we may expect to happen. Christ strengthens the hearts of the disciples and persuades them to have the firm conviction that he is truly ascending to God the Father in heaven to rule with him and to take his seat with him as God and as the one begotten of him by nature as God. Do not consider my

[71] Heb 12:15.

departure—that is, my visible departure according to the flesh, since as God I will be with you always—to be the same as that of the holy prophets. Since they were from the earth and had to pay the debt of their nature, they were brought low and passed away according to the law of human beings. **[528]** But since I am God by nature, I am not in the same condition as those whom I created, awaiting the time of the resurrection. I live always, and I am life by nature. I will send the Paraclete, and I will give you my peace, and I will not lie. I have foretold this and spoken it to you so that when you receive what I promise and are enlightened by the grace of the Holy Spirit, you may ratify the truth of my words and bring them to your remembrance, as I said, after the experience, that you may believe firmly that I am with the Father and I reign with him. The fulfillment of my promise will thus confirm the truth of my words. After all, if I am not life, he is saying, if I do not sit with God the Father, how could I give divine and spiritual gifts? I will bestow them as I have promised, and I will supply the Spirit and peace. How then is it not clear that without a doubt I am life and I reign with the Father? After all, enlightening those who love me with divine gifts is not the work of one who does not exist or who is powerless, but it is the work of one who does exist and is powerful and reigns forever. With these words, Christ teaches that his prophecy about the future was not empty. He says that he made the statement so that they might have confident faith in him when they bring his prediction to mind and remember it after they experience the gifts.

14:30-31 "I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of the world is coming, and he has nothing in me; but I do as the Father has commanded me, so that the world may know that I love the Father."

When the unholy Jews were already at hand, along with the **[529]** band of soldiers whom they brought and their leader who promised to betray him—when they were about to arrest him and after a short time carry him off to great suffering before and during the crucifixion, he said that he would break off his discourse with them. The time is short, he says, and already past. Now that the bloodthirstiness of the Jews is in full bloom against me and shows itself already within the gates, it is no longer the time for talking with you; it is the time for my passion. But the "ruler of the world has nothing in me," he says. I will die very gladly, and I will undergo death for the life of all. Through reverence toward my Father and love for him, I willingly agree even to what is unthinkable that I may fulfill his will.

Now the intent of this passage is very plain. We may summarize it briefly as follows: Adam, the founder of our race, underwent death by God's curse because he broke the commandment that was given to him. He was accused both by himself and by the devil. He clearly suffered this penalty for good reason, since it is not unjust for just punishment to pursue those who have sinned out of laziness. But the second Adam, that is, our Lord Jesus Christ, can be accused of nothing at all, since "he committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth."[72] Yet he endured suffering for us even though completely blameless in himself. He offered himself to suffering as a ransom for the life of all since he "loves the Father," who thirsts for the salvation of the world. Surely it was the work of one who loves the Father not to disregard what pleases him and what he has resolved but to be eager to carry it out. And what was that? **[530]** He wanted his own Son, who had the same form as he did and who was illustrious with complete equality, to descend to such humiliation that he became human for us and was not ashamed to die for the life of all. This the Son has done out of love for his Father, who is said

[72] 1 Pet 2:22.

to have ordered him by his own power to kill death through the suffering of his flesh, to destroy the power of decay, to bring to life those who have suffered decay, and to restore them to their ancient glory. That is why he says that the time for speaking is short. My suffering is drawing near, and the audacious deed that the Jews have plotted against me has already been kindled. I will suffer willingly, since that is why I have come.

But "the ruler of the world is coming, and he has nothing in me," that is, I will not be convicted as a transgressor, nor will the Jews have a reasonable pretext for their drunken rage against me. The devil has nothing of his own in me. Vices are his attributes, as it were, and the origin of sin knows him to be its source. One may see from the following that the Savior's statement is true. How could he have sinned who knew no sin, who was God in nature and truth, who was not susceptible to any turning toward anything that is not right? We will see this not least in the writings of the holy Gospels. The most wise John introduces Pilate saying, "I find no case against him."[73] And again, after they put the crown of thorns on him, Pilate raises his voice and says, "Look, I am bringing him out to you to let you know that I find no case against him."[74] And Matthew says that he so hated the crime that he washed his hands before the Jews and said, "I am innocent of this man's blood."[75] When Matthews depicts Jesus once he is brought before the chief priests themselves, **[531]** he says, "Now the chief priests and the whole council were looking for false testimony against Jesus so that they might put him to death, but they found none, though many false witnesses came forward."[76] Even though testimony against him was sought by human beings, the devil was using them as tools and servants of his own malice. The devil, not someone else, was the one trying to find transgression in him. Therefore, it is true that the devil had nothing of his own in him. Christ called him the "ruler of the world" temporarily, not because he really was its lord, but because like some savage barbarian, he took possession of what did not belong to him by the law of conquest. He subjected humanity to himself through sin, and he drove them away from God like sheep without a shepherd and ruled over them, though they belonged to someone else. Therefore, he was rightly cast out from the rule he had so obtained. Christ is our king. Therefore, he says, "Now the ruler of this world will be cast out and I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself."[77]

"Rise, let us be on our way."

The usual and well-worn explanation of the passage, which the common people hold, would have us interpret it as follows. Since the time for the madness of the Jews has now arrived, he displays the precious cross of the Savior as practically set up, and he hurries to depart, together with his disciples, to the place where the band of soldiers found and arrested him. And this explanation is plausible. But it is likely that he wants to communicate another meaning as well, a spiritual and hidden one. He wants to indicate to all of us that through him and in him, there would be a transfer from one place to another and a departure from the worse to the better. **[532]** Therefore, he says, "Rise, let us be on our way," so that we would understand something like this to be true: we move from death to life, from corruption to incorruption, through him and in him, as I just said, as from one place to another. Therefore, he does well to say, "Rise, let us be on our way." Or you may interpret the statement in yet another way concerning ourselves. From now on we are going to be transformed from

[73]Jn 18:38.
[74]Jn 19:4.
[75]Mt 27:24.
[76]Mt 26:59-60.
[77]Jn 12:31-32.

wanting to set our mind on earthly things to choosing to do what pleases God, and besides this to pass from slavery into the dignity of adoption, from the earth to the city above, from sin to righteousness (through faith in Christ, that is), from human impurity to sanctification through the Spirit, from dishonor to glory, from ignorance to understanding, from fear and cowardice to endurance in goodness.

So he posits that location as the place, as it were, for our sins on earth, and he says, "Rise, let us be on our way." If, as far as the form of his statement is concerned, he shows himself bound together with us, this will not hurt our position at all, since it is his usual practice to do this. For example, in another passage he may be found to say to his disciples, "We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming when no one can work."[78] Do you hear how he includes himself with us in the duty of doing works, even though he is not subject to the duty of works as we are? This form of speech is commonly used among us; we will find it no less among ourselves. For instance, the divinely inspired Paul dares to use this form of speech when he rebukes the Corinthians. He writes, "I have applied all this to Apollos and myself for your benefit, brothers, so that you may learn through us not to think beyond what is written."[79] **[533]** And there is no doubt that we have not an elder, not an angel, but the Lord of all himself as our leader on the road to all good things, though he was not subject to our weaknesses. He turns us from our old passions to something better. After all, we have been redeemed not through ourselves or through any other originate being but through Christ our Savior himself. Therefore, when he says, "Rise, let us be on our way," as one who escapes the evils in the world along with us, he is saying this not as one who is subject to or held by human passions but as a leader and champion and guide on the road to incorruption and life in sanctification and the love of God. **[534]**

[78]Jn 9:4.
[79]1 Cor 4:6.

Chapter Two

The Son is of the same substance as God the Father, not of a different or foreign nature as some twisted people say.

15:1 "I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine grower."

He wants to show that it is good for us to cling to our love for him and to show what great profit we will gain from our union with him. So he says that he is the vine as an illustration, and that those who are united to him and fixed and rooted in him, so to speak, who have come to share in his nature by participation in the Holy Spirit, are the branches. His Holy Spirit is what unites us to Christ our Savior. The union with the vine of the branches that proceed from it belongs to the faculty of choice, and the vine's union with us is relational.[80] By a good choice, we have drawn near through faith and have become his offspring,[81] receiving the honor of adoption from him. Indeed, according to Saint Paul, "Anyone united to the Lord is one Spirit with him."[82] Likewise in other places he is called a foundation and basis by the voice of the prophet. On him we are built up (we being living and spiritual stones)[83] "into a holy priesthood, **[535]** into a dwelling place for God in the Spirit."[84] If Christ were not our foundation, there would be no other way we could be built

[80]Cyril's point here is that the union between the vine and the branches is voluntary and relational as opposed to ontological. He is denying that believers are of the same substance with Christ's divine nature.
[81]Acts 17:29.
[82]1 Cor 6:17.
[83]1 Pet 2:5.
[84]Eph 2:22.

into this. So also here, on the same principle, he says that he is the vine, since the vine is the mother who nourishes the branches that come from it. We were reborn of him and in him in the Spirit to bear the fruit of life, not the old life of ancient times but life in newness of faith and love for him. We are preserved in our hold on existence by clinging, as it were, to him, by holding tightly to the holy command that was given to us, and by our eagerness to preserve the blessing of our noble birth, that is, by refusing to grieve in any way the Holy Spirit who dwells in us, through whom God is understood to dwell in us. The wise John himself will show us how we are in Christ and he in us when he says, "By this we know that we are in him and he is in us: by the Spirit whom he has given us."[85] And again, "By this we know that we are in him: whoever claims to abide in him ought to walk just as he walked."[86] And he makes this even clearer to his hearers by saying, "Whoever keeps his commandments abides in him and he in them."[87] Now if keeping the commandments works love toward him, and we are united to him through love, how could his statement in this passage not be clearly true? Just as the root of the vine serves and distributes the enjoyment of its own inherent natural qualities to the branches, so also the only begotten Word of God imparts to the saints a kinship, as it were, to his own nature and that of God the Father by giving them the Spirit, insofar as they have been united to him in faith and perfect **[536]** holiness. He nourishes them for godliness and works knowledge in them of every virtue and good work.

He also calls the Father a "vine grower." What is the reason for this? The Father does not stand idly by while the Son nourishes us and keeps us in good condition in the Holy Spirit. Setting us right is the work of the entire, as it were, holy and consubstantial Trinity. The will and power in everything done by the Trinity runs through the whole divine nature. Therefore, the Trinity is glorified completely by us, even in one person. We call God "Savior" not because we receive the graces he mercifully grants us partially from the Father, partially from the Son and partially from the Holy Spirit, but because we say that our salvation is truly the work of the one divine nature. And if it should seem good to ascribe to each person something that was given to us or accomplished around the creation, we will still believe no less that all things are from the Father, through the Son and in the Spirit. Now you should understand, and quite rightly so, that the Father nourishes us for godliness through the Son in the Spirit. He cultivates us, that is, he watches over and cares for us and deems us worthy of his correcting attention through the Son in the Spirit. In this way we will think rightly rather than otherwise, at least in our opinion. If we attribute to each one partial activity in his dealings with us, and we claim that this activity does not belong to the other, how could there be any doubt that since the Son is now called the vine and the Father the vine grower, we are nourished by him in particular and we are preserved in our good condition by the Son alone, while we have mere oversight from the Father? After all, to nourish its own branches properly belongs to the vine, while watching over them belongs to the one who tills the soil. If we think rightly, however, we will surely hold that neither the one function apart from the Father **[537]** nor the other function apart from the Son and the Holy Spirit would accomplish the whole task. Everything is from the Father, through the Son and in the Holy Spirit, as we have said. The Savior very carefully calls the Father a "vine grower," and it is not hard to explain the reason for this. So that no one may think that

[85] 1 Jn 3:24.
[86] 1 Jn 2:5-6.
[87] 1 Jn 3:24.

the Only Begotten exercises care over us by himself, he has brought in God the Father as a coworker, as it were, saying that he is the "vine" that supplies life and the ability to bear fruit to his branches, and his Father is the "vine grower." By this he teaches us that taking care of us is understood to be another activity of the divine essence. We had to—had to!—learn that God not only makes us partakers of his nature, which is understood to be in the holy and consubstantial Trinity, but that he also carefully watches over us, which is very appropriately indicated to us here by the figure of cultivation. Since he spoke before of the vine and its branches, surely the reference to the vine grower in this passage is quite apt since it introduces the one who watches over and cares for everything, that is, God. And if we believe that the Son is naturally and truly in his Father, and he has the Father in his own nature, and all things will be accomplished through both in the Spirit as by one divinity, then the Father will not be excluded from nourishing us, and the Son could not reasonably be considered foreign to our cultivation. Where one finds members with identical definitions of an identical nature, their activity is not separate, even though it may perhaps be understood to be carried out in various different ways. Since there is one essence of the true and natural divinity understood in three hypostases (I mean in the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit), how is it not **[538]** indisputably clear that when we speak of an activity of one of them, this is a work of the one whole divine nature, according to the principle of natural power?

For example, our Lord Jesus Christ, accepting his Father as a coworker in all things, once went among the unholy Jews and said, "I have shown you many good works from the Father. For which of these are you going to stone me?"[88] And again, concerning the work on the sabbath, "My Father," he says, "is still working, and I also am working."[89] I do not think anyone would imagine that he is saying the Father handles part of creation and the Son handles another part. Rather, the Father does all things through the Son and would never do anything otherwise (since he is his wisdom and power). That is why the Son called the Father a worker of his own works when he said, "I do nothing on my own, but the Father who dwells in me does his works."[90] I think that we should understand it in no other way than this when Christ is presented as a vine and we are joined to him like branches, enriched, as it were, by his grace and drinking in through the Spirit the power for bearing spiritual fruit.

Since the bitter argument of our opponents attacks those of us who have chosen the right path, and they try to persuade us to think what is not lawful, we will make matters clear for our hearers by condensing what one of them expounded at great length. "You know," he says, "the Only Begotten deftly refuted those who think that he is of the same substance with God the Father and made them look ridiculous. See, he clearly calls himself a vine and his Father a vine grower. So just as a vine and a vine grower are not the same in essence," he says, "since one is wood and the other is a human being, but they belong to completely different classes and **[539]** categories; so also the Son is not of the same substance with the Father, but the definition of their substance distinguishes and separates them very widely, if one is a vine and the other is a vine grower. There is no doubt that some unjustifiably try to refer these words to the *oikonomia* in the flesh. However, he does not say that his flesh is the vine, but rather his divinity is the vine. To whom will it not be clear," he says, "that our body does not depend on the flesh of the Savior like branches depend

[88]Jn 10:32.

[89]Jn 5:17.
[90]Jn 8:28; 14:10.

on a vine, and neither is the fruit of the saints fleshly, but spiritual? Therefore, putting aside for the moment the category of flesh, we will ascribe the meaning of the statement to the Son's divine nature itself, and we will say that it is the vine on which we depend by faith."

He raves this way because he completely rejects the orthodoxy of the divine dogmas in favor of what seems right to him, and he maliciously perverts them into conformity with his own preconceived meaning. But we who cling to the truth are completely convinced that it is not so, and their position is sorely lacking. We will follow the footprints of the understanding of our holy fathers and arrive at the dogmas of the truth. Now we should explain (not inelegantly) how one ought to understand the meaning of the passage, at least the meaning that is accessible to us, and we must also investigate how we must equip ourselves to counter their arguments. If we could pass over them in silence and see that no harm would enter the mind of the simple from them, we would rightly conclude that their vain arguments are not worth spending time on, and we would proceed to the consideration of the next passage. But since it would do no small damage if such dogmas were accepted by someone, does it not [**540**] follow that we, moved by zeal and love for God, should engage the battle with arguments and words? In this way the villainy of the opponents may easily be detected.

Come, let us first say this: it is completely foolish to misconstrue what is given as an illustration and introduced as likeness of a matter to be an indication of its nature or essence. I think that those who want to understand any statement correctly must look at the intended meaning and attentively examine what the person who made the statement had in mind. Consider whether, in light of the passage before us, what we say does not seem right to you. It was not Christ the Savior's intention to teach the disciples that he himself was different in nature or separate from the Father, and this was not why he decided to call his Father a vine grower and himself a vine. If this were his intent, why did he not end the statement there without adding anything to it? He would have signaled his intent (as you see it) without confusion if he merely gave these names to himself and the Father. As it is, however, after establishing that he is the vine and saying that we are attached to him like branches and then ascribing to the Father the practice of cultivation, I think it should be clear and evident to all that he means no such thing as you suppose, but through coarse illustrations, as it were, that are accessible to the eyes of the body, he wants to persuade his hearers that the power for all our spiritual fruit bearing comes from him, just as the quality of a vine, of course, passes into the branches that spring from its root. Every good quality that we have is given, but that is not so with God. He is in himself the source of his own excellent attributes, both glory and power, [**541**] which belong to him alone. That is why Christ is the root, as it were, and the "vine," while we are the "branches." And even though he calls the Father the "vine grower," you should not say that he is of a different substance. That is not what he wants to indicate, as we have said, but he wants to show that the divine nature is both the root and the source of the spiritual fruit bearing and life that we have. And besides the blessings we just mentioned, the divine nature tends us like a vine grower and applies the oversight of its love to those who are called by faith into fellowship with it. The dissimilarity in the illustration, therefore, has nothing at all to do with the definition of their essence, since Christ our Savior does not intend to address that subject. His teaching has a different goal.

The insane heretic in his folly wants to say what is not right. He claims that no argument will permit anyone to drag the intent of the passage away from its so-called right meaning and make it refer to the incarnation of Christ,

since we were not joined to him in body, nor did the apostles remain in the body of Christ like branches; indeed, they were connected to him not in this way but with a pure disposition and faith. Come, therefore, and let us address these matters briefly and show that he is altogether senseless and does not follow the Holy Scriptures. Now the substance of our doctrine will in no way deny that we are united spiritually with Christ by a disposition of perfect love, by a right and uncorrupted faith, and by a virtuous and pure mind. We agree that he is quite right in saying this. But we will show that the bold claim that there is no reference to a union according to the flesh between us and him is completely out of harmony with the divinely inspired Scriptures. How could there be any dispute, and what right-thinking person could ever doubt that Christ is the vine **[542]** in this sense? And we, filling the role of branches, take into ourselves the life that comes out of and from him. Paul says that we all, "who are many, are one body in Christ, because there is one bread; for we all participate in the one bread."[91] Let anyone interpret this for us and teach us what it means without reference to the power of the mystical blessing.[92] Why do we receive it within ourselves? Does it not make Christ dwell in us bodily by participation and communion with his holy flesh? I think it is correct to say this, since Paul writes that the Gentiles have become "members of the same body, fellow participants and fellow heirs" with Christ.[93] And how are they made members of his body? When they are admitted to participate in the mystical blessing, they become one body with him, just like each of the holy apostles. Otherwise, why did Paul refer to his own members (or rather the members of all under the guise of his own members) as the members of Christ? He writes, "Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Should I therefore take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? Never!"[94] And the Savior himself says, "Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood abide in me, and I in them."[95] Here one may especially see that Christ says that he will be in us not by a mere relation understood in terms of disposition but by a natural participation. If one combines one piece of wax with another and melts them both with fire, one piece is made from both. In the same way, by participation in the body of Christ and his precious blood, we are united so that he is in us, and we are in him. There was no other way that what was subject to decay by nature could be made alive except by being combined bodily with the body of him who is life by nature, that is, the Only Begotten.

And if you are not convinced by my **[543]** words, give credence to Christ himself when he cries out, "Truly, truly I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood have eternal life, and *I* will raise them up on the last day."[96] Here you hear him clearly stating that if we do not eat his flesh and drink his blood, we do not have eternal life in ourselves, that is, in our flesh. And "eternal life" is quite rightly understood to be the flesh of life, that is, of the Only Begotten. How or in what way this raises us on the last day, you must surely hear and I will not hesitate to explain. Since flesh came to belong to life, that is, to the Word who shines forth from God the Father, the flesh was transformed with the power of life, and it is impossible that life should be conquered by death. Therefore, since life has come to be in us, it will not put up with the bonds of death,

[91]Rom 12:5; 1 Cor 10:17.
[92]Cyril uses the word *blessing* to refer to the Eucharist.
[93]Eph 3:6.
[94]1 Cor 6:15.
[95]Jn 6:56.
[96]Jn 6:53-54.

and it will surely conquer decay, since it cannot endure the effects of it. For, "the perishable does not inherit the imperishable," as Paul says.[97] Since Christ uses the emphatic expression "*I* will raise him up,"[98] he does not ascribe to his flesh by itself the power to raise those who are asleep. Since God the Word who is in the flesh is one with his own flesh, he is quite right to say "*I*." After all, Christ is not divided into a pair of sons, and neither should anyone suppose that his body is foreign to the Only Begotten, just as of course no one, I think, would say that the body belonging to our soul is foreign to our soul.

Through these considerations it has become clear to us that Christ is the vine and we are the branches in the sense that we have fellowship with him—not only spiritual fellowship but bodily fellowship as well. Why, then, does the heretic utter such vain foolishness, **[544]** claiming that we have been united in fellowship with him not corporeally but by faith and by a disposition of love according to the law, and that Christ did not call his flesh the "vine" but his divine nature? Why, someone might ask, does he reject the interpretation that is more fitting and appropriate and eagerly adopt one that is very different? Will we not grant that Jesus is the vine more fittingly because of his fellowship with the flesh, and that we are the branches because we have the same nature? The branches, after all, have the same nature as the vine. We say this not because we are trying to deny the possibility of union with Christ through a right faith and sincere love, but rather we are trying to show that Christ is the vine and we are the branches both spiritually and bodily.

The word of truth is simple and clear, but the opponent maliciously refuses to agree that Christ is the vine corporeally in that he grants his own life to the branches (that is, to us) just as the visible and earthly vine grants life to the branches that cling to it. Instead, he twists and forces the meaning of the passage to refer only to his divine nature. He thought he could thereby slander that nature with this ignorant assertion: If Christ is the vine, he says, and the Father is the vine grower, and the Son is of a different nature than him as is the case with the vine, then the Son will not be of the same substance with the Father, he says.

He thinks that he has built up a deep and incisive and incontrovertible argument against the dogmas of the church, but he will nevertheless be caught speaking nonsense. First, since he maintains that the Son belongs to a different class by nature and he excludes him from the essence of the one who begat him, how could he still call God "Father," and how could he call the Son "Son" in any sense? If he says that he has not been begotten, that is, he has not proceeded from the essence of the Father, **[545]** just as the offspring of human beings proceed from them, how could he be a true Son? Next, how will he set aside the blessed John, who says, "Whoever denies the Son denies the Father as well; whoever confesses the Son confesses the Father as well"?[99] And this statement is true, since the one act is completely taken up in and subsists in the other. He would not be a Father without the Son, nor could the Son ever be thought of without also thinking of the one who gave him life. So since he denies the Son (since he says that he belongs to a different class), he has also denied the Father himself. What then, good sir, will you say to this? Who ultimately is the object of faith? Where is the glory of the holy Trinity? The nature that rules over all, which is indicated to us in the words of the Holy Scriptures, has been taken clean away. (Their stunning deceit forces us to engage in such

[97] 1 Cor 15:50.

[98] Greek often leaves the subject of a verb unexpressed if that subject is a pronoun. When the pronoun is expressed, it has the effect of emphasizing the pronoun. I have rendered this emphasis by italicizing the word *I*.

[99] 1 Jn 2:23.

unpleasant discussions.) But perhaps he is terrified by the magnitude of his blasphemy and he says that the Son is of another class, but he is still begotten of God the Father. We in turn will ask: How, then, do you grant and confess that he is begotten? If he is begotten like one of the creatures, by a relation determined by love and will (since all things are said to be from God), he will nevertheless end up at the same blasphemy. If he says that the offspring is true but insists that he is alien and goes on after this to say that he belongs to a different class, he will surely blaspheme against the begetter himself. He would surely imply that God underwent something that even created nature manages to avoid. Is it not the case that something that is truly begotten of another by nature is clearly of the same substance with the begetter? How could this not be obvious to everyone? The creature, then, comes forth in a way that is fitting, since the creature does not beget something of a different class. We will discover that only God experiences the opposite, if he has indeed begotten something of a different class and not a Son of his own nature.

[546] Now it is likely that our opponent would not want to offer any further reply to this. But if he does not desist from his ill counsel and insists that the Son belongs to a different class than God the Father, we will not hesitate to advocate for the dogmas of truth against him. We will show that he is saying that God the Father belongs to the same class as creation. How or in what way, you may now learn. He clearly says and maintains that not the flesh but the very divine nature of the Only Begotten is called a "vine." Let us suppose that is so. In that case I will ask, and let him answer, whether he thinks the Son is true God or not; or whether he will say that he is a bastard and has that honor in name only. If he says that he is not God by nature, let him accept the Only Begotten as a witness for himself when he says, "I am the truth."[100] The truth has only one form; there is no bastard truth or truth in name only. And let him accept the most wise John himself as well, who cries out clearly and says, "And we are in Jesus Christ, the true God. He is the true God and eternal life."[101] But if perhaps he is ashamed of his position, and he gives up his contention and confesses that the Son is God, we will not go anywhere else but will use his own words to refute what he says: "Is not the vine of a different class than the vine grower? The one is a human being; the other is wood." In the same way, should not the vine be rightly and truly understood to be the same nature as the branches? I do not think that anyone wants to sink to such stupidity as to dare to deny what is so obvious. Therefore, since he is true God, he is of the same substance as him who is true God by nature, that is, the Father. Moreover, he is the vine and we are the branches, and by the same reasoning we are clearly of the same nature as the vine. How, then, will we ourselves not be gods by nature, putting off our own nature, as it were? **[547]** But only wicked people who have reached the pinnacle of impiety can think that. We have been created, but the Son is God by nature. Then how can this be? How can what was said of him be true if the branches indeed have the same nature as the vine? Either we have to ascend to the nature of the true divinity or that nature has to descend to us, since the branches have the same nature as the vine. Since the Son clearly says, "I and the Father are one,"[102] we will ascend together with him to the likeness with God the Father in all things, or else the Father himself will be dragged down with the Son, who has the same nature as we do, to our likeness. You see, then, what a confusing mass of blasphemies arises from this position. Therefore, we will instead follow the interpre-

[100]Jn 14:6.
[101]1 Jn 5:20.
[102]Jn 10:30.

tation that comes from the truth and believe that it was by way of illustration that the Son said, "I am the vine, you are the branches, and my Father is the vine grower."

15:2 "He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit."

Our union with Christ is habitual, and the power of the connection is by free choice. The union perfects us by faith and love. Faith dwells in our souls, supplying a pure manifestation of the knowledge of God, while the way of love requires us to keep the command that he gave us. Indicating the one who loves, he said somewhere, "Whoever loves me will keep my commandments."[103] We must realize, then, that if we are united to him by faith and we practice the form of our connection with only barren confessions of faith, and we do not clench the bond of union with works of love, **[548]** we will indeed be branches, but dead and unfruitful ones. For without works faith is dead, as the saint says.[104] So if anyone thus appears to be and is a branch that clings fruitlessly, so to speak, to the trunk of the vine, let them understand that they will surely encounter the vine grower's pruning hook. He will completely cut it off and hand it over to be consumed by the fire as worthless rubbish. That is the judgment against the fruitless, just as in the case of the fig tree that was set before us as a parable. The master of the land says to the farmer, "Cut it down! Why should it waste the soil?"[105] So also here I think that the Father and God of all cuts down the thick and barren tangle of branches that hang from the spiritual vine to no purpose. I think that the one who cares for our souls, that is, God, wants to show through this parable what great harm the soul that is cut off from fellowship with him endures. It will wither away and become useless for any good work, but it will doubtless be handed over to punishment and become food for the all-consuming fire.

He explained this quite clearly through the prophet Ezekiel, for example, when he said, "Son of man, of all the wood in the trees of the forest, what shall be done with the wood of the vine? Will people take wood from it to do any work or to hang a vessel on it? The fire consumes that which is pruned from it every year, and at last it is gone. Will it be fit for any work?"[106] Know, then, that once it has been cut off and completely severed, it is completely useless and can no longer be taken for any necessary task but quickly becomes useful only as firewood. Is it not clear, therefore, that if we have become a branch **[549]** and have been drawn away from the error of polytheism and have confessed faith in Christ, but we are barren when it comes to the union that shows itself in works, we will surely be subject to the punishment of the fruitless branches? And what is that? We are cut off completely and will be given to the fire because we have lost the life-giving sap (that is, the Spirit) that we once had from the vine. One may see that what Christ said about the man who buried his talent[107] also happens in the case of those who are completely cut off. Just as the talent is taken away from him at once, so also I think the Spirit is taken away from the branch like sap or like some quality.

And why is the Spirit taken away? So that the Lord's Spirit may not seem to be condemned by the Lord along with those who are about to descend into the fire. Earthly rulers do not quickly decide the fate of those who were once honored and exalted by royal favor. If they happen to be arrested for something that rightly deserves punishment, they would

[103]Cf. Jn 14:23.
[104]Jas 2:20; cf. Jas 2:26.
[105]Lk 13:7.
[106]Ezek 15:2-4.
[107]Mt 25:18.

not undergo the punishment until after they are stripped of their honors. So how is it not necessary that the soul that is condemned by a decree from above for something that deserves punishment first lay aside, as it were, and be stripped of the grace of the Spirit before experiencing the evils? He says that the fruitless branch will suffer such things, and in saying this he protects our mind extremely well so that we want to hold fast to our love for him through active virtue and unshaken faith. And he says that the fruitful branch will not be left untouched by the care of the one who works the soil, but it will be purified so that it can bear even more fruit. God works with those who have chosen to live excellent lives, as well as they can, and who have chosen to do good works as far as possible and to behave in all their conduct as people who love God.

[550] He uses the activity of the Spirit as a kind of pruning hook, as it were, circumcising in them sometimes the pleasures that always summon them to love the flesh and fleshly passions, and at other times those temptations that happen to the human soul, defiling the mind with various kinds of evil. We say that this is the circumcision that is understood to be done by the Spirit and not by human hands, of which Paul says at one point, "For a person is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision something visible and in the flesh. Rather, a person is a Jew who is one inwardly, and real circumcision is a matter of the heart—it is by the Spirit, not the letter. Such a person receives praise not from others but from God."[108] Again at another point he says, "In him you were circumcised when you believed with a circumcision not done by human hands."[109]

In addition, they say to some that if a purging of the branches of the spiritual vine takes place, this will not happen, I suppose, without suffering. It is painful to the extent that and in the way that wood can feel pain. We should think that matters are similar in the case of the saints, and if we consider the matter carefully, we will give them our constant praise. Our virtue-loving God disciplines us with suffering and affliction. For example, the prophet Isaiah says to us, "The Lord will wash away the filth of the sons and daughters of Zion, and he will purge out the blood from their midst with the spirit of judgment and the spirit of burning."[110] Furthermore, the divinely inspired Paul says, "If you endure discipline, God is treating you like children; for what child is there whom a father does not discipline?"[111] Indeed, the choir of saints, who exceed all wonder, do not reject discipline given by those who are by nature holy[112] but rather eagerly welcome it, saying, "Discipline us, O Lord, but with judgment and not with wrath, lest you make us few."[113] The complete cutting off of the fruitless branches will take place in wrath, since he sends them to punishment, **[551]** but the purging of the fruitful branches will take place in judgment, that is, with care and within measure. It causes only a little pain, but it urges them on to bear more fruit and forms the basis of more blossoms springing up. For example, when they receive this, certain people cry out, "Lord, your discipline is small affliction to us."[114] The affliction of purification is very small, but since it provides us with heavenly discipline, it makes us blessed. And the blessed David will also be brought in as a witness, who cries out, "Blessed are those whom you discipline, O Lord, and whom you teach out of your law to comfort them in evil days."[115] The days of impartial judgment are truly dreadful and evil

[108]Rom 2:28-29.
[109]Col 2:11.
[110]Is 4:4.
[111]Heb 12:7.
[112]Cyril is referring to the persons of the Trinity.
[113]Jer 10:24.
[114]Is 26:16.
[115]Ps 94:12-13 (Ps 93:12-13 LXX).

to those who are completely cut off and who are about to descend into the punishment of fire, but that is when God comforts those he disciplines. Such a person would never be numbered among those liable to judgment and punishment because that person is not a fruitless branch. Therefore, let the fervor of works be joined to the confession of faith, and let it unite deeds with the doctrines about God. Then—then we will be united with Christ, and we will find the power of our fellowship with him to be safe and secure as we escape the danger of being cut off.

Now we have said these things because it seemed right to establish a spiritual interpretation of the passage. But it is likely that the Lord intended to indicate some other meaning as well when he stated clearly, "He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit." By the "branch" that is separated from fellowship with Christ by being cut off by the Father, I think he means the people of the Jews who are not capable of bearing good fruit. The thrice-blessed John says that the ax will be brought against them and the tree that is cut down will be thrown into the fire.[116] But those **[552]** who do not need to be completely cut off but remain in the vine and are going to be purged by God's care are the believers among the Jews and the converts to them from the Gentiles, since there is one purging for them, accomplished by the Holy Spirit according to the Scriptures, even though the manner of purification is separate and distinct. For those of Israel, the desire to keep living and conducting themselves according to the law of Moses is cut off from them, while for the idolaters, the ancient error is removed from their heart along with the rubbish of their impure, ignorant customs, that they may be able to bring forth the food of the divine gospel training and serve it to God, as it were, and bear fruit that is truly pleasing to him.

It is not difficult to provide assurance from the divine Scriptures themselves that what we have said is clearly true, in our view. The divinely inspired Paul writes to the believers among the Jews that when they placed little value on the dogmas of the gospel, they went back again to honoring the shadows of the law: "You who want to be justified by the law, you have been alienated from Christ; you have fallen away from grace."[117] And again, "I tell you that if you let yourselves be circumcised, Christ will be of no benefit to you."[118] If the desire to be justified by the law alienates them from Christ, how could there be any doubt that rejecting the law's way of life supplies the power to be united with Christ? In this way Israel is circumcised, or rather purged, and so is the one who once worshiped the creature rather than the creator, by casting off their ancient disease. What does Paul say to them, "For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, much more surely, having been reconciled, will we be saved by his life."[119] In another place he finds fault with them and says, "Now, however, that you have come to know God, or rather **[553]** to be known by God, how can you turn back again to the weak and beggarly elemental spirits of the world? How can you want to be enslaved to them again?"[120] Since those who want to serve the weak elemental spirits are alienated from Christ, and those who refuse to serve creation rather than the creator are united to him, who could disagree that the manner of purification for the Gentiles will consist of the Spirit beneficially cutting off the ancient error and bringing us in various ways every kind of blessing in its stead? By putting off and rejecting what is evil, the beauty of

[116]Mt 3:10.

[117]Gal 5:4.
[118]Gal 5:2.
[119]Rom 5:10.
[120]Gal 4:9.

virtue is conspicuous by contrast. Where what is shameful is driven out, what is holy appears and arises.

We need to point out that the circumcision by the Spirit is what accomplishes the needed purification in us, and that the Son is the supplier of the Spirit, "for from his fullness we have all received," as John says,[121] and he himself is the one who says to us, "Receive the Holy Spirit."[122] Thus the Father effects the purification in us through the Son by way of a circumcision understood to be by the Spirit. So the rash and unholy audacity of our opponents has been brought to nothing. They did not shrink back from saying that since the Son said that he was the vine and God the Father was the vine grower, he must not be the same in nature as him. "No argument will ever convince me," he says, "to think that a vine grower and a vine are the same in essence." So when the Son is found to prune the vines through the circumcision by the Spirit, let them be consistent in their position. Vine growers are of the same class as each other, since they are human, so it is clear that the Son belongs to the same essence as God the Father and is not foreign to him. **[554]**

15:3 "You are already pure because of the word I have spoken to you."

The disciples serve as clear and unambiguous proof, as it were, of his skill at purifying them. He says that they have already been purified not because they have received this benefit from someone else but only because of the word that was spoken to them, that is, the divine guidance of the gospel. This word is from Christ. What right-thinking person could doubt that, like a pruning hook, the hand of the Father through which all things exist (that is, the Son) accomplishes this activity of pruning in us, and that he ascribes this activity to the person of the Father, teaching that all things are from the Father, but they take place through the power of the Son? Indeed, the word of the Savior purifies us, though our pruning is ascribed to God the Father. He is the living and razor-sharp Word, who "pierces even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow, discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart."[123] Reaching into the depths of each person's soul and perceiving the hidden intentions of everyone (since he is God), he cuts out our vain pursuits through the activity of the Spirit. I think this is how we should understand the purification. He multiplies all things that are beneficial to us for the attainment of virtue so that we may bear fruit, which is understood in a godly way.

So when our pruning is beautifully carried out by the Father through the Son, the extravagant and irreverent attempt of the opponents is brought to nothing. How could it not be? They try to say that the Son is of a different nature from God the Father because he calls himself the vine and his Father the vine grower. Let them observe and examine carefully that he decrees that his disciples are pure **[555]** not by his Father's separate and distinct activity on them, that is, apart from the Only Begotten, but because they believed his word. Just as the Father gives life through the Son and in the Son, in the same way I think he should reasonably be understood to be the vine grower (or the one who cares for our souls) in no other way than through the Son. Those who advocate the opposing position think that once they say something incorrect, they should stick with it. Since Christ said he was the vine, they are forced by necessity, as it were, into thrusting him into a different class. In that case, what prevents us from employing the same shamelessness against them and refuting them, even against

[121]Jn 1:16.
[122]Jn 20:22.
[123]Heb 4:12.

their will, with the same nonsense? We could start with the following puerile and absolutely ignorant idea. Since Christ is said to be the vine, and on that account they think that he falls short of a natural relationship with God the Father, and is of a completely different substance since a vine and a vine grower are not identical in essence, why could we not employ the same ignorant and clumsy argument against them and say this: Does the care of the vine grower apply only to the branches, and does the benefit of his skill extend only to the branches that depend on the stem, or does that which nourishes the branches (that is, the vine), to which they cling and are fixed by nature, need some tending? I do not think this will be difficult to prove. Our opponent will immediately agree that if the stem receives no care the branches will not do well. Since Christ called himself the vine and the stem of the vine needs to be tended by the vine grower or it will be completely ruined, we will draw the conclusion **[556]** that the Son is in the same class as we are and he requires tending by the Father just like we do, so that he may not be changed into something other than what he is and fall from his own class or his own position. The childish starting point of the enemies of God ultimately leads to this conclusion.

But let us leave these thoughts, afflicted as they are by great ignorance, and proceed to his statement about the holy apostles. He says, "You are already pure because of the word I have spoken to you." It is as if he were saying: The spiritual purification that is understood to be through the Spirit and in the Spirit has been performed by the Father through my word on you first. See, you have thrown off the disturbance of vain customs and worldly corruption, and you are ready to bear God-pleasing fruit. See, you have been freed from the profitless and vain legal observance of the Jews. My word has purified you, since you no longer conduct yourselves in accordance with Moses or in accordance with the letter of the law. Do not seek sanctification in food or drink or in teachings about baptisms or in offerings of blood, but believe that it is brought about by a firm faith, and be eager to please God with every good work. The power of spiritual worship is seen in these things. Those who are going to be pure, he says, will be pure, as you are. Those who are now escaping from the nets of the devil and of idolatry will be taught to live no longer by his laws but to shake off the impurity of their former customs as vain rubbish so as to be made ready by divine grace to bear the fruit of God-pleasing works of virtue. They will be joined to me like branches, **[557]** and when they are attached by their love for me, their heart will be nourished by the streams of the Spirit. By drinking in the grace of my goodness they will endure to the end and be nourished for godliness. When the Israelites are united with me by faith and attached to me like branches, then—then they will receive the purification of their mind by my word. They will no longer waste time devoting themselves to the letter or fix their heart on shadowy types as they do now, but they will bear fruit to God with the true worship in the Spirit. "For God is Spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth."[124] At the same time, he clearly shows to his disciples, with a figure, the beauty that will belong to those who are about to be purified, and he urges them on to attain even more ample virtue, showing that their training and instruction in his teaching had not been in vain—I mean the teaching of the gospel, through which they were about to benefit people throughout the whole world, offering themselves as examples for those who believe in Christ. It is written of the saints that we ought to watch the "outcome of their way of life"[125] and to imitate their faith. Paul too

[124]Jn 4:24.
[125]Heb 13:7.

urges those who worship God to be imitators of him.[126]

15:4 "Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me."

We will learn, through a careful investigation of this passage, that being received by Christ through faith that is pure and true is the first work of zeal that is necessary and God-pleasing. **[558]** That is what it means to be numbered among the branches attached to the true vine, that is, Christ. I think the fruit of our second investigation is no less than that of our first, but it has an even more serious concern: the desire to be united and cling tightly to God through love that is recognized by works, which is the fulfillment of the holy and divine command. This is what causes us to be inseparably fixed in him. As the psalmist says, "My soul has been joined to you."[127] Being received among the branches, however, will not suffice for our complete joy or for the sanctification that shows how Christ is sanctifying us. I maintain that in addition we must genuinely follow him with perfect and unfailing love. Indeed, in this love the power of our connection or union in the Spirit would be best maintained and preserved. So when Christ said to his disciples, "You are already pure because of the word that I have spoken to you,"[128] lest anyone should think that once they are purified they become immune to falling, even if they make no effort to remain in their good condition, he beneficially adds that they ought to abide in him. And what does this mean? Nothing else, it seems to me, than what Paul said so clearly and so well: "So if you think you are standing, watch out that you do not fall."[129] A thousand falls happen to those who think they stand securely if they do not make great effort to maintain their good condition. I think we must have great modesty and sobriety about ourselves, even if someone should think they are firmly fixed by the progress they have already made in establishing themselves in good deeds. **[559]**

He appropriately demonstrated what kind and how great the damage is that one sustains when one is cut off from union with God by slipping, as it were, into what is not right due to laziness. He did this by adding the statement, "Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me." If the branch does not have the life-giving sap supplied to it from its mother the vine, how could it yield grapes? What fruit could it bear and how? Similarly, then, you should understand the statement to apply to us. No fruit of virtue will ever sprout in us if we have fallen away from our union with Christ. However, the ability to bear fruit will easily belong to those who are joined to him who is able to feed and nourish them for godliness by the bounty and grace of the Spirit, like life-giving water. The Only Begotten knew this, and he said in the Gospels, "Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink."[130] And the Spirit-bearing Evangelist explained this quite well to us when he testified, "Now he said this about the Spirit, which believers in him were to receive."[131] In addition, the blessed David himself prayed to God the Father, saying, "With you is the fountain of life, and you give them drink from the river of your delight."[132] Who else could be understood to be the fountain of divine and spiritual life and the river of delight besides the Son, who feeds and waters our souls with the life-giving joyous

[126]1 Cor 11:1.
[127]Ps 63:8 (Ps 62:9 LXX).
[128]Jn 15:3.
[129]1 Cor 10:12.
[130]Jn 7:37.
[131]Jn 7:39.
[132]Ps 36:10, 9 (Ps 35:10, 9 LXX).

grace of the Spirit, like branches attached to him by love and faith? [**560**]

15:5-6 "I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing. Whoever does not abide in me is cast out like a branch and withers; such branches are gathered, thrown into the fire and burned."

Our Lord Jesus Christ is clearly saying that he called himself a vine for this reason and this reason alone: that we may clearly understand and practically see even with our physical eyes, in a coarse and perceptible and utterly clear example, that those who are zealous to be attached to him and have chosen to cling tightly to him will have the ability and readiness to give birth to virtue and spiritual fruit. They are supplied with power from the vine, as from a mother, both to have the ability and to carry it out. However, in those who have been torn away, as it were, or cut off from their relationship with him by being turned to what is not right[133] and to conduct that is out of harmony with God, no capacity for fitness for virtue will be found, and neither will they have the ability to distinguish themselves by the fruits of good works. Instead, as by an inevitable necessity, they will have to be devoured by all-consuming fire. That which is useless for godliness is evidently fit to pay the penalty, just as withered branches will be useful only for the fire.

You could find an unambiguous and definitive proof of what we have said not by examining the writings of the ancient saints but by applying your mind to the holy apostles. They have become known throughout the world for not neglecting their love for Christ in any [**561**] way but continually abiding in him and insisting that they should put nothing else before reverence toward him. They showed the world the fruit of their virtue; they offered themselves as an example of conduct that is pleasing to God, like a bright image to those under the sun; and they wreathed for themselves an unfading crown of glory with God. But the one who for a little silver was trapped in the net of destruction (I mean the unscrupulous and utterly petty Judas) and cut off from the spiritual vine (that is, Christ) "withered" away, as it were, and rejected the life-giving quality of the Spirit along with the honor of discipleship. He was "cast out," as the Savior says. He was alienated from Christ and was handed over like rubbish to him who punishes with fire. Our Lord Jesus Christ, then, beneficially displays to his hearers the joy that comes from the eager desire to be united with him, and he also sets before them the harm that comes from being cut off, thus contriving for them two ways of being saved. Either by a desire that looks toward glory and life or because we are avoiding the punishment of fire, we will lay hold more eagerly to our union with him with all the strength of our mind.

He says that the Father is the vine grower, thus granting oversight of our affairs to the divine nature, as has been demonstrated by our long discussion above. And he is the hand of the vine grower, which is understood to be no different than him because of the fact that it is consubstantial and from him and in him, just as one can see is the case also among us. To see that all things are through the Son as through the hand of the Father, listen to what he says about the creatures: "My hand made all these things,"[134] even though all things came into being through the Son, according to the Holy Scriptures.

We should further note that the divinely inspired Paul also obliquely refers to pruning in this sense, [**562**] even though he is not talking about a vine, when he says, "Note then the kindness and the severity of God: severity

[133]A few words of this sentence are missing in the manuscript.

[134]Acts 7:50.

toward those who have fallen, but kindness toward you, if you continue in his kindness; otherwise you also will be cut off."[135]

15:7 "If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you."

He says that the desire to be indissolubly united to him is the root of the highest favor, along with the desire to guard inviolate in the mind—like a divine and spiritual deposit—the true instruction of the gospel teachings and of the dogmas of the faith, fortified by pure interpretations. The whole discourse of the Savior would convey this to us if we will examine the aim of the Gospels. How could we deny that Christ's promise to grant blessings continually to those who ask is quite clearly a pledge to us? I suppose it is also necessary to examine what the precise wording of the statement intends to communicate to us as well. "If you abide in me," he says, "and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you." Would anyone say that one could remain in Christ without having his words in oneself? Actually, people with sharper minds would probably say this. Let our dear hearer recall that when we investigated the nature of love for Christ, carefully examining what it is and how it comes about, we said that it has a twofold way (I mean the way of faith that is wholly blameless, and the practical way of action, which is introduced quietly through pure love). If we believe that his words hold true with us, **[563]** then those who practice an extremely unsafe and limited kind of union or relationship, who confess a bare faith with words but do not receive the love that is formed to perfection through works, do remain in Christ when it comes to the relationship of faith, perhaps. At any rate, they do not go off into some other worship. But they should no longer be considered to have Christ's words in themselves. Now we are certainly not claiming that they bury the proclamation of the gospel in forgetfulness and are completely unmindful of the Savior's words. Rather, we are saying that they place no value on the way of life in Christ, submit everything to their own pleasures and have an unbridled inclination to think only of earthly matters. For this reason, they are pulled off the spiritual and holy vine, and they spurn the grace of kinship through their own love of passions. Christ himself said of every such person, "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven."[136] And the disciple of Christ indicates that faith that is by itself and alone, which is not accompanied by the glory of works, will not have sufficient ability to supply the relationship with God when he says, "You believe that God is one. Even the demons believe—and shudder."[137] So in reply to those who think that a faith that is naked and alone will have sufficient ability to bring about the relationship that is from above, one should say: Will the band of demons therefore rise to a relationship with God just because they know that he is one and believe that he exists? How could this be? The mere knowledge that the creator and originator of all things is one God is useless. I think that the boast of reverence for him must accompany faith. **[564]** Such a person both abides in Christ and is seen to have his words, according to the statement addressed to God in the book of Psalms, "I hid your words in my heart, so that I may not sin against you."[138] Just as if one were to put the seed of fire into a bronze vessel, one would surely make it a participant in the heat from the fire—so also the mind

[135]Rom 11:22.

[136]Mt 7:21.

[137]Jas 2:19.

[138]Ps 119:11 (Ps 118:11 LXX).

that contains the divine and heavenly word in its soul and heart by the desire for every virtue is always enflamed by that word toward this condition. After all, it is written, "Your word burns intensely with fire, and your servant loves it."[139]

Therefore, he says, let those who have established themselves in this and have ascended to this honor so that they remain in me and have my words in themselves approach without hesitation and ask for whatever they want with great boldness, and it will be given to them without delay, for I will grant it, he says. Well, if someone should ask for something wicked, will they get it with no trouble? Will he who loves virtue be a supplier of such things? Away with you, you evil counselor! God will not supply anything that is discordant or at all subject to the accusation of shamefulness. That would not be right or just, would it? You should interpret the matter in a more fitting way. Since those who remain in Christ also have his words in them, it is clear that because he is good and kind, they know how to think only what is most pleasing to God. After all, he appropriately permitted those who have the divine word in their heart to ask whatever they want because he was not unaware that their desire was for participation in spiritual and divine blessings. Since Christ our Savior has clearly defined in these words the character of those **[565]** who could pray and ask for whatever they want from God, let us mold our own conduct according to that definition when we pray to obtain favor from above. But if you know that you are not such a person as Christ just indicated to us, do not be dismayed if you stumble. If the task seems burdensome to you, then join the glory of good works to your faith—for this is what it means to remain in Christ and to have his words in you—and approach him with confidence and receive without any delay whatever you ask from God!

[139]Ps 119:140 (Ps 118:140 LXX).

15:8 "By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples."

He says that God his Father is glorified. He is justly admired for his sheer goodness, and he has woven together proof of his extreme mercy like a crown. For he "so loved the world," as it is written, "that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes in him may not perish but have everlasting life."[140] The life of all, then, is a fruit of the mercy of God the Father, carried out, that is, by Christ. That is why he himself said somewhere, addressing God the Father, "I glorified you on earth by finishing the work that you gave me to do."[141] The Only Begotten was entrusted, as it were, by the Father with the salvation of us all. He accomplished it quite well, not as one understood as a servant but as being the very wisdom and power of the one who begat him, without which absolutely nothing would come into being. All things are through him, according to the holy Evangelist, but we are in a special way. For example, the blessed David declares that the ordering of our affairs and the bringing about of the life of all **[566]** is entrusted to the Son by the Father, in that he is his power and wisdom, when he says, "O God, command your power and strengthen what you have wrought in us,"[142] and again somewhere else, "O God, give your judgment to the king."[143] It was the work of him alone who reigns with God the Father to restore the whole earth, which had fallen into decay, and to be able to transform it to what it was in the beginning. Therefore, "my Father is glorified" by giving his own Son as a ransom for the life of the world, being pleased to see among us him who is above all creation, not to bring about any blessing for his own nature (since he is utterly perfect and lacks

[140]Jn 3:16.
[141]Jn 17:4.
[142]Ps 68:28 (Ps 67:29 LXX).
[143]Ps 72:1 (Ps 71:1 LXX).

nothing because he has power over all), but that "you may bear more fruit and become my disciples." If he had not become human, we would not be deemed worthy of sharing in his nature, and neither would we cling to him like branches and receive from him the power of bearing fruit through participation in the Spirit, thus producing the fruit of a God-pleasing way of life.

He calls the fruit "much" in order to put the fruit of the law's worship behind him and show that it is inferior. "For the law perfected nothing," as Paul says.[144] That is why he said to the holy disciples, or rather to all of us who are united to him in faith and perfect love, "Truly, truly I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven,"[145] and again, "Every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like a rich man who brings out of his treasury what is new and what is old,"[146] casting out, as it were, from the treasury of the heart the discourses of Moses **[567]** and the memory of the ancient writings. Those who are willing listeners, ready to learn and full of the torch light of the gospel, have riches that are great and multiplied (in the Spirit, I mean). They bring out the new and the old, transforming the shadow of the law and the power of legal worship into the form of the gospel way of life. What the law showed through types Christ showed openly in truth. That is why he said, "I have not come to abolish the law, but to fulfill it,"[147] and again, "Truly, truly I tell you, not one letter, not one stroke of a letter, will pass from the law until all is accomplished."[148] The power, then, of evangelical worship is the "much fruit," which is in Spirit and in truth, since the Only Begotten became human to the glory of God the Father. That is how those on the earth become his disciples.

He addressed the ancients long ago through the prophets as God,[149] saying to us and about us, "And they will all be taught by God."[150] There is no one who has intervened to bring his word to us who believe in him, nor was there a mediator of his will to us, like Moses was, of course, a mediator for the Israelites on Mount Sinai or the prophets after Moses were for those of their time; rather, Christ himself has taught us. That is why we are all taught by God. So we would not have become his disciples at all, and we would not have produced the fruit—indeed, "much" fruit—of love for God, if the Father had not been "glorified" by his mercy, taking such delight in us that the Word who proceeds from his essence became human. That is how we should understand it when we hear the divine Scripture saying that he has given his own Son. He agreed with him who chose to suffer for us, and therefore it is quite reasonable to say that he has given him. **[568]**

15:9-10 "As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you abide in my love, just as I have kept my father's commandments and abide in his love."

We must examine the mysteries in this passage with the clearer eye of the mind. The statement is deep and sets before us the entire significance, so to speak, of the *oikonomia* in the flesh. He states that he is loved by God the Father and that he in turn loved us in the same way he was loved by the Father. Why, then, did he add this point? Because we ought to abide in his love. He also gives the basis of this and a most compelling reason why he is justly loved by the Father: the keeping of his commands. And he commands us to be eager

[144]Heb 7:19.
[145]Mt 5:20.
[146]Mt 13:52.
[147]Mt 5:17.
[148]Mt 5:18.
[149]Heb 1:1.
[150]Jn 6:45.

to keep them as well. In this way, he says, we will remain in his love. With these words we have explained clearly the meaning of the passage, summing it up briefly as far as possible. But since I think that it is good to ease the mind of the pure, which is sometimes troubled not a little, come, let us say again how and in what sense we understand the meaning of the passage. Our Lord Jesus Christ is clearly presenting himself as a type, as it were, and an example of holy conduct. He was born under the law and did not disdain to take on the measure of our poverty. He did this so that he might mold himself to our disposition in accordance with the *oikonomia* and be our guide. He is an example to those who are his, for the attainment of conduct and life that we are not accustomed to and in which we have never walked.

[569] Therefore, we must investigate what command he obeyed and where, and in what sense he is said to be loved by him. So let the most wise Paul come to our aid and teach us the mystery when he says that he was in the form of God, "but he emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross. Therefore, God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name."[151] Did you hear how even though he was true God, in that he had the same form as the Father who bore him, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death? Since God the Father willed to save the earthly race that was corrupted, and it did not satisfy justice that any originate being should accomplish this—since the task exceeded all the power in the world—the Only Begotten, who knows the will of God the Father, undertook the *oikonomia*. Thus he lowered himself to voluntary subjection so as to descend even to death, and a disgraceful one at that. After all, how could being nailed to a cross be honorable, or rather how could it not exceed every other disgrace? But since he endured these things, Paul says, God highly exalted him. You have, therefore, in his willing obedience the fulfillment of the purposes of the Father. And the Son says that these purposes count as commands to him. As the Word, he understands the deliberation of the Father and searches the deep thoughts of the one who bore him; or rather he himself is the wisdom and power of the Father. He puts the thought into action, considering it a command and calling it such in a human expression. Notice the measure of his love in this. God has highly exalted him, says Paul. He exalts and glorifies him who was already exalted and glorified, even though he is true God by nature in that **[570]** he does not exist as one of the creatures (because of the identity of his essence). For this reason he is understood to be and truly is beyond all spiritual exaltation, and he is the Lord of glory, according to the Scriptures.[152]

All right, someone might say, he is exalted and glorified, but how, and when, and in what way? It was when he came to be in the form of a slave and in the form of humiliation, that is, when he became human like us. That is because he ascends with his flesh to be exalted and glorified once again with the Father. He was loved by the Father, and not for the first time, when he fulfilled his voluntary subjection. You can see this from the following. He was always exalted and glorified according to his own nature, yet he who was bereft of God-befitting glory according to his humanity is said to have been glorified and exalted when he became human. In the same way he was always and forever loved even from the beginning, but he is said to be loved also in the flesh. He appeared like us, that is, he was called and became human, for this reason: in order to

[151]Phil 2:7-9.

[152]1 Cor 2:8.

make that which was hated in ancient times, because of the transgression in the beginning and the sin that had crept in, to be loved by God. That is why Christ is said to have appeared as the gate and the beginning and the way of all blessings for us. Does he not tell you that he was loved without reproach because he kept the Father's commandments? Does not the mystery seem difficult to you, and is not the depth of the *oikonomia* accomplished on our behalf inaccessible to your intellect? But "all things are plain for those who understand and right for those who have knowledge."[153]

"Abide in my love," he says, that is, proceed with all zeal and fervor to put into practice and accomplish that which is worthy of love from me of the same kind I have from God the Father. I have been obedient and have carried out the will of the Father, **[571]** and for this reason I am dearly loved. And when you keep my commands, you will surely "abide in my love" in the same way. You will have no excuse for laziness in this matter, he says, since your labor will not be unrewarded. I will openly grant such love to you as I myself have from the Father, crowning the one who keeps my word with almost equal honors. The Father has highly exalted me and has given me "the name that is above every name."[154] I have been declared the God of the universe, but I will not be caught being envious or begrudging you such blessings. Indeed, I have made you into gods and children of God—you who are human and who for this reason have the nature of a slave. By grace I have made you illustrious with honor beyond your nature. I have received you as sharers in my kingdom. I have conformed you to the body of my glory.[155] I have honored you with incorruption and life. All right, but these things are in hope and are reserved for the age to come. What about the present age? Have I not made you illustrious and glorious and made you holy beyond all who love God? You have rebuked the unholy demons, and I have given you power to heal "every disease and every sickness."[156] I have promised you, "Truly, truly I say to you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do and, in fact, will do greater works than these."[157] If we take in the meaning of the passage, we will think that this is what he is saying to the holy disciples. If we always yoke our mind to the dogmas of the truth and we turn the investigations we undertake as much as possible to the profit of the hearer and to the practice of godliness, we will avoid unintentionally tripping over any stumbling block. It is written in the book of Psalms, "Those who love your law have great peace; nothing can make them stumble."[158] **[572]**

15:11 "I have said these things to you so that my joy may abide in you, and that your joy may be complete."

When he introduced the statement about the vine and the branch that is separated and cut off from its nourishing mother, as it were, teaching that it will be completely useless and be consumed by fire, he terrified his disciples quite a bit. Bad news, even though it is not about the present, is likely to terrify the hearers in no small degree, especially when the obscurity of the future engenders in them the suspicion that it could actually happen. For example, when it is possible that a storm will arise and the fierce, wild waves will attack, voyagers who are about to sail the sea fear it as already present, even though they do not yet see it present but it is still only in the obscurity of mere thought. Therefore, he beneficially renews the courage of the shuddering disciples,

[153]Prov 8:9.
[154]Phil 2:9.
[155]Phil 3:21.
[156]Mt 4:23.
[157]Jn 14:12.
[158]Ps 119:165 (Ps 118:165 LXX).

who are afraid because of the dreadful things they heard and are stupefied at the impending trials. Leaving his gloomy statement, he speaks to them of their joy in God. O my disciples, he says, I did not say this to you to instill cowardice or vague fear in your mind, and I certainly did not say it so that you might be found shattered by the evil to come and lacking all boldness in doing good. I said it so that the opposite may happen and you may have my joy and "my joy may abide in you."

Next I think we must investigate more carefully what this is and what Christ wanted us to understand by these words. We should understand it in two ways. One may say that the words *that you may have joy concerning me* or *in me* are in a statement that has no other meaning than the obvious one. **[573]** In this case, you have exhausted its meaning when you consider the reward of otherworldly blessings and the future recompense of your labors and the magnitude of your glory before God. However, we will not shrink from examining and considering it in another way and proceeding to a deeper meaning. I think we must carefully and reverently track down the intent of every statement. What then does "so that my joy may be in you" mean? Does it mean that the Only Begotten became like us, that is, a human being but without sin, and decided to undergo and suffer all that the accursed madness of the Jews led him to experience? We will find that he was insulted and persecuted and struck with bitter reproaches and spat upon and beaten with rods. He was not exempt from the outrage of scourging. And finally, in addition to all these things, he was nailed to a cross for us and for our sake. And with all this terrible suffering, he was not bowed down in grief, and he did not shrink from the humiliation of the suffering that the *oikonomia* required. Instead, he was full of appropriate joy and gladness, since he saw the multitude of those being saved and the will of God the Father being fulfilled. On this account he considered the dishonor to be joy and thought of the suffering as delight. Even when many jarring outrages were committed against him, we will find it written that then Jesus "rejoiced in the Holy Spirit and said, 'I thank you Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent and have revealed them to infants; yes, Father, for such was your gracious will.'"[159] Do you hear how when he sees the infants and the unintelligent made wise, he rejoices and exults in the Spirit and gives thanks, as it were, on our behalf to the Father who saves us? Indeed, when **[574]** he passed through the land of the Samaritans, he was wearied by the journey, as it is written, and "he sat at the well" of Jacob. When the woman presented to him her need for drawing water, he told her what would likely happen and anticipated that a crowd of Samaritans would arrive, and he openly thought little of necessary nourishment. After all, what did he say to the disciples when they advised him to partake of their food? "My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to complete his work."[160] Would it not, then, be clear from this that he considers it a joy and a delight to do the Father's will, that is, to return to salvation those who had fallen into destruction? There is no doubt.

I said these things to you, he says, "so that my joy may be in you," that is, so that you may be encouraged only by those things that encourage me, that you may have courage in suffering, that you may gird yourselves with hope regarding those who are being saved.[161] And if you happen to suffer because of it, may you not be dragged down into listless apathy but instead rejoice ever more fully since through you his will is being fulfilled "who wants everyone to be saved and to come to the

[159]Lk 10:21.

[160]Jn 4:34.

[161]This last phrase seems particularly appropriate if Cyril is addressing catechists.

knowledge of the truth."[162] After all, I too rejoiced at these things and I counted this suffering a delight. So when you choose to have this joy that I thought was fitting for myself, he says, you will have it perfectly and completely.

We consider joy to be perfect and most complete when it is in God and on account of God and oriented toward good works because of the permanence and stability of hope. And because it arose from the proper source, not only we but also Jesus himself delights in it. We also say that the joy of the world is imperfect because it is frenzied and because of the pleasures it fulfills, that is, worldly things, which flit away like phantoms [**575**] and shadows. We say that hatred of certain things is perfect when it arises justly and rightly among us, just as the blessed David surely says concerning the opponents of the glory of God, "I hated them with a perfect hatred."[163] In the same way, we say that love is perfect when it prepares those who choose to have it in God and on account of God to devote themselves completely to God, not when it is fixed on worthless earthly objects.

15:12-13 "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends."

With this addition, he now clarifies the meaning of what he said earlier, that is, that the disciples ought to have his joy in them. He says clearly, I command and teach you this: those who think it right to follow me act and think in such a way that they practice the same love for each other that I have demonstrated and fulfilled before them. He himself shows how great one may see the measure of Christ's love is when he says that there is no love greater than the love that obediently lays down its life for those it loves. In all these words, he is practically commanding his disciples that they should put away all their fear of suffering on behalf of those who are being saved to the extent that he too was utterly ready and unhesitating to undergo the death of the flesh. The power of our Savior's love attained that great a measure. These words belonged to the one who did these very things. He encouraged his disciples to attain remarkable bravery beyond their nature; he exhorted them to the height of brotherly love; he fortified them with courageous thoughts [**576**] that are pleasing to God; and he raised them to an invincible and undaunted desire to be zealous and fervent in carrying out what most pleases him. Paul showed himself to us as such a person when he said, "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain,"[164] and again, "The love of Christ constrains us, because we think that one died for all, and so all died."[165] And in addition to this, "Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will trouble or hardship or hunger or nakedness or danger of the sword?"[166] Do you hear how he promises that nothing at all will be able to stand between us or be strong enough to cut us off from the love of Christ? And if tending the flocks and feeding the lambs of Christ is what it means to love him,[167] how could it not be utterly clear that the one who proclaims the message of salvation to those who do not know God will be superior to death and greater than persecution and the sword and will pay no attention at all to tribulation? If it is fitting to summarize the words of the Savior into a condensed meaning to express more briefly what he wants his disciples to do, he is commanding them to keep their mind utterly free from hesitation and from all fear and to proclaim the message of faith in him and to place the gospel clearly

[162]1 Tim 2:4.
[163]Ps 139:22 (Ps 138:22 LXX).
[164]Phil 1:21.
[165]2 Cor 5:14-15.
[166]Rom 8:35.
[167]Cf. Jn 21:15-16.

before people throughout the world. He says the same thing through the voice of Isaiah, "Go up to a high mountain, you who preach the gospel to Zion, lift up your voice with strength, you who preach the gospel to Jerusalem. Be strong; do not be afraid."[168]

And we find that the disciples themselves ask God in fervent prayer that they may be able to accomplish this when they condemn the madness of the Jews and say, "And now, Lord, consider their threats and give your servants the ability to speak your word with great boldness."[169] After all, there are admittedly a great many people who oppose and impiously rail against those who serve the gospel [**577**] of Christ. But even if the fear is sharp and the waves of evil counsel rise up most dreadfully, suffering means nothing for those who are truly disciples. They will put their acts of love into action, I mean the kind of love the Savior showed us "who, for the joy set before him, endured the cross, scorning its shame,"[170] so that he might bring about salvation for sinners. If he had not chosen to suffer for us, we would still be dead, servants of the devil, "foolish and blind,"[171] remaining deprived of every blessing, slaves of pleasure and sin, "having no hope, and without God in this world."[172] But as it is, the Savior laid down his very life for us out of his love for us. He exhibited sheer love for humanity and made us enviable and thrice-blessed, lacking no good thing.

The meaning of this passage, understood this way, will fit with the divinely inspired sections of writing[173] of the disciples. If this statement will go out into all the world, that is, the statement "This is my command, that you love one another as I have loved you," everyone will greatly benefit by investigating it. If love for the brothers keeps and fulfills our Savior's entire command, how will the one who, without blame or censure, tries to accomplish this as far as possible not be worthy of the highest admiration, since the chief of all the virtues, so to speak, is wrapped up in it? After all, love for one another is second to love for God, and the entire power of reverence toward God is fulfilled in this statement: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."[174] [**578**]

15:14-15 "You are my friends if you do what I command you. I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father."

In contrast to the fear that sometimes results from obedience and love of virtue, he establishes the reward for loving him so that through the consolation of that reward and the desire for what is greater, the burden of that fear may disappear and the suffering that sometimes appears may dwindle to nothing. The burden is pleasant for those who love God when a rich reward is at hand. And what could be thought greater, what could anyone say is more glorious than being called and being a friend of Christ? Notice how this honor surpasses the limit of human nature. All things are servants of the creator, as the psalmist says,[175] and I do not think there is any originate being that is not placed under the yoke of servanthood, according to the appropriate definition of both creator and creature. That which is made is not equal to the one who made it. How could it be? But

[168]Is 40:9.
[169]Acts 4:29.
[170]Heb 12:2.
[171]Mt 23:17.
[172]Eph 2:12.
[173]κεφαλαῖς. The word refers to sections of Scripture that correspond to units of sense. See the discussion on p. xxiii. He probably chooses this word because of its etymological resonance with the phrase "chief (κεφάλαιον) of all virtues," which he employs later in the paragraph.

[174]Gal 5:14.
[175]Ps 119:91 (Ps 118:91 LXX).

God, who is over all, will rule and direct his own works. The universe, then, is under a yoke and bows its neck to God in servitude, but the Lord raises the saints to a glory that is beyond their nature, if they show themselves willing to do what pleases him and present him with their blameless subjection as an offering. Therefore, their reward is glorious and worthy of envy.

Yet we must examine the following point carefully regarding this passage, since it will bring no small profit. If friendship with the Son is sufficient for anyone to have the honor of freedom and of no longer being called "servants," how could he be a servant or a creature or an originate being, as some foolishly maintain? After all, he cannot bestow the honor of freedom on others if his own nature is bereft of it. **[579]** I maintain that he must have this more than the others, since he is going to give his own good quality to those who do not have it. But as for the holy apostles and all others who ascend by faith to friendship with our Lord Jesus Christ, this dignity would be given and imparted from the outside, as an honor, not in the same way as his dignity. They who mount up to the glory of freedom by likeness to him would display something that belongs naturally to him and him alone. That which is true by disposition is always described in comparison with that which is true by nature.

Since I think we must go through every consideration that is useful and requires an explanation, we must also note that the righteousness that is by faith in Christ has a more ancient manifestation than the righteousness of the law. In addition, the knowledge of the divine mysteries is revealed to those who believe in and obey Christ, and the will of God the Father is explained by the Son, who knows it. But this is not so for unbelievers.

Come, then, let us demonstrate this from the divinely inspired Scriptures, profitably dwelling on it for a little while. It is written in the book of Moses that Abraham "believed God"[176] and that his faith was reckoned to him "as righteousness, and he was called a friend of God."[177] What kind of faith did he have, and why was he called a friend of God? He heard, "Go from your country and your kindred to the land that I will show you."[178] And when he was commanded to sacrifice his only begotten son as a type of Christ, he was taught the hidden purpose of God. In fact, the Savior said of him to the unholy Jews, "Abraham your father rejoiced to see my day; he saw it and was glad."[179] Therefore, because of his obedience and sacrifice the divinely inspired Abraham was called a friend of God, and he was clothed with the boast of righteousness. **[580]** Not only that, but he was also deemed worthy of the divine word, and he knew the will of God that would be accomplished in the end times. At the close of the ages, Christ died for us—the truly sacred and holy sacrifice that takes away the sins of the world.

Now note that the same things happen to those who ascend by faith to friendship with Christ our Savior. They too have heard, "Go from your country." And they have done so eagerly. Listen to what they say: "For here we have no lasting city, but we are looking for a city that is to come, whose architect and builder is God."[180] They are strangers and sojourners upon the earth, since their citizenship is above. They have left the land of their birth, as far as their God-loving thoughts are concerned, and they desire the mansions above. This is what the Savior set before them when he said, "I go to prepare a place for you, and when I come, I will take you with me that where I am, you also may be."[181] They were also told to go forth from their family. And

[176]Gen 15:6.
[177]Jas 2:23.
[178]Gen 12:1.
[179]Jn 8:56.
[180]Heb 13:14; 11:10.
[181]Jn 14:3.

how will we demonstrate this? We will bring Christ himself before you, who says, "Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me."[182] There is no doubt among those who truly worship him that the things of God are more important than earthly and fleshly kinship, and the love for Christ is far stronger. The blessed Abraham was commanded to offer his own son to God as a sweet fragrance. And those who have girded themselves with the righteousness of faith are commanded to offer not others but themselves. "Present your bodies," it says, "as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship."[183] Since it is written of them, "Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires,"[184] they too know the mystery of Christ. They know the "powers of the age to come" **[581]** and what will happen in the last times. They know they will receive a reward for their labors and be repaid for their devotion to Christ. Thus we will be called righteous and friends of God, just like Abraham.

The gospel way of life, that is, faith and friendship with God, is far more ancient than that of the law. It was established first in Abraham, the founder of a fleshly race, that is, Israel. Now it proceeds from a type to the truth, as it were. It is beautifully fulfilled in the holy disciples themselves, as in the first fruits of a spiritual race, a people preserved as God's own possession, which is also called a holy nation and a royal priesthood.[185] That is why the voice of the psalmist says to the mother of the Jews, I mean the synagogue, "In place of your fathers, your sons have been born."[186] Even though the divinely inspired disciples were sons of the Jewish synagogue in that they conducted themselves according to the customs of Moses, they have become fathers, holding the position of Abraham and establishing themselves as the beginning of a spiritual race. That is why they were ordained as rulers, offering up the gospel of Christ throughout all the world, just as he offered up Isaac as a type of Christ. We say this not to exclude the blessed Abraham from the appropriate glory that is due him but to show in him, as in a type, what is decreed by Christ to happen in the end times. The dignity of friendship with God goes with and is joined to the freedom that comes by faith. It was first seen in Abraham long ago but now in the holy disciples as first fruits. The divinely inspired Paul conveys to us the necessity of speaking this way when he vehemently contends with the Jews that the righteousness of faith is much older than the righteousness of the law. When **[582]** he mentioned the circumcision of the flesh, he maintained that it was given to the first fruits of the race, that is, Abraham, for no other reason than that he would be a "sign and seal of the righteousness that he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised."[187] Now uncircumcision, along with faith, was before the law; and after the law circumcision does not have the boast of faith, but Abraham believed while he was uncircumcised. So how could the righteousness that comes through faith and belongs to those who are justified and freed by friendship with God, just like Abraham, not be older than the law's way of life? Thus he will be the "father of many nations"[188] by the promise, not according to the flesh. Now we have said these things for the sake of edification because of the Lord's words, "I no longer call you servants; you are my friends because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from the Father."

[182]Mt 10:37.
[183]Rom 12:1.
[184]Gal 5:24.
[185]1 Pet 2:9.
[186]Ps 45:16 (Ps 44:17 LXX).
[187]Rom 4:11.
[188]Rom 4:18.

15:16 "You did not choose me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name."

He does not allow the holy disciples to be burdened by words that are too grievous, since he is not unaware, as God, of the great tendency of human thought patterns toward weakness; and neither does he allow excessive encouragement to lead them to backsliding, since that is a sickness and a serious one at that. He forms a middle ground out of both, as it were, and leads them fittingly to a safe path and works knowledge in them of the more stable way of life that is free from all stumbling. Once he has more than sufficiently applied the balm of comforting words and persuaded them to rejoice in the face of those things that would reasonably depress them, he incites them to courage by his commands to be diligent. **[583]** He charges them to be very zealous and to practice exemplary love for one another. In this way they benefit even the unbelievers and are eager to catch the erring by godly words and actions so that they have a desire to be united with God by faith.

Therefore, he presents himself as an image and type in this matter. He brings up what he has already accomplished for them, and he persuades them to imitate their teacher and to be illustrious with the same accomplishments, saying, "You did not choose me, but I chose you," and the words that follow. You should understand him to be saying something like this: Gird yourselves with love for one another, O disciples. You yourselves ought to think and do those things for each other that I have already done for you, and to devote yourselves with intense zeal to putting them into practice. For "I chose you"; you did not choose me. I drew you and made myself known to you through my exceeding kindness when you did not know me. I gave you knowledge that was so sure that it raised you up to attain the ability always to reach for what is better and to bear fruit for God. By this you may proceed to such a level of boldness that "whatever you ask for in my name" you receive. Since you follow in the footsteps of my words and my ministry so that you are equipped with the knowledge that is fitting for genuine disciples, it is not appropriate, simply by delaying, to hold back those who have chosen to have faith and have called themselves to a godly life. Rather you should offer yourselves as guides to those who are still ignorant and erring, and bring the saving proclamation even to those who have not yet chosen to learn it, and eagerly urge them to reach the understanding of the true knowledge of God, even if the mind of your hearers is hardened in unbelief. In that way they would be **[584]** like you, that is, they will advance and grow into what is better so that they bear fruit in God. In this way they will have the fruit that is always preserved and abides, and their prayer will be so acceptable that they will receive whatever they ask, if only they ask it "in my name."

Now we must gather together the intent of the passage in a few words and present it clearly to the hearers. He persuades the disciples to have the same love for others and to be willing to practice the same unhesitating diligence in tracking down the souls of those who do not yet believe and in bringing them to godliness, as he first showed to us, or to them. There is no doubt that he chose the disciples. And I think it would be superfluous to say how and in what manner the call of each one took place. Furthermore, the following will persuade us no less that the Savior's statement is pregnant with some such intention as we just explained. "I have said these things," he says, "that you may love one another."[189] Will we not grant that it is the work of the highest love of all to choose and to call to obedience to God those who are still unbelievers and in error?

[189]Jn 15:17.

There is no doubt. Paul is eager to do this when he says, "We are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God."[190] And Peter says to the Jewish people with boldness, "And now, brothers, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did also your rulers. Therefore, repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ."[191] You see how zealously they meet those who have not yet believed and bring the word to those who have not yet asked for it. They do not make the ignorant **[585]** first choose their teachers, but they anticipate them in this, even in the case of one who does not yet want to learn what is necessary.

Since the words of our Savior have this addition, "that you may go and bear fruit, fruit that will last," it is right for us to investigate what this means. What does the statement mean that the disciples' fruit "will last"? I think the Savior is saying that the fruit that will last is the fruit that comes from instruction in the gospel and not the fruit of the righteousness of the law. The latter has become obsolete because it cannot be fulfilled. The law has made nothing perfect, as Paul says,[192] but the new righteousness bloomed instead, as it were, and lifted up its head. It made the former righteousness obsolete and took it away, while it introduced fruit that truly lasts and is preserved. Moreover, the divinely inspired Paul tells us that he would gladly and readily consider the righteousness of the law to be loss that he may gain Christ, that is, the righteousness and gospel fruit-bearing that comes through faith in him. Such fruit will last forever and can make the human soul overflow with godliness. No other new instruction besides the gospel proclamation will sneak in and make the first obsolete, as happened with the command of Moses, but the word of the Savior will stand forever, as he himself says somewhere, "Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away."[193]

15:18 "If the world hates you, be aware that it hated me before it hated you."

I think that we will find that the Savior's method is not at all lacking in the remarkable skill and experience of physicians, which he applies to every matter, always and in every way **[586]** attending to the profit of the hearers. Physicians control the malady of suffering that sometimes happens to the body with the resources of their skill, while he blocks the entrance of evils by fortifying the soul of each person with his preventative commands, as it were. Now the disciples were going to be rulers not over one nation or one land, but rather they were going to guide every nation under the sun and preach the divine word of the gospel to people throughout the whole world. They would turn their hearers to faith in the only God and transfer them from sin to the will to do what is fitting for them and to make the law the rule for their life—I mean the law of the gospel. Accordingly, he commands them to disregard the hatred of the world, that is, the hatred of those who set their mind on earthly things and choose to live an ungodly life devoted to pleasure. And what might this mean? Tell me, would anyone venture to say that when Christ decided to give his disciples this command, showing that hatred is something profitable, he did so without distinction and with no regard for the benefit they needed? Away with this ignorance! His statement would not sink to such a level. His counsel not to be overly concerned applies not simply to being hated by everyone, but he says with a precise definition and distinction, "If the world hates you," that is, if those who

[190] 2 Cor 5:20.
[191] Acts 3:17; 2:38.
[192] Heb 7:19.
[193] Mt 24:35.

honor worldly things and those who set their mind on earthly matters should hold you in contempt, then know, he says, that your teacher endured this before you. One may quite easily see that the Savior's command will bring immeasurable profit to those who expound the most beautiful teachings if one examines the nature of the matter. It is always the desire, or rather, it is the object of earnest endeavor **[587]** on the part of those who love what is shameful and who have reached the summit of worldly indecency to thrust aside the word that calls them to their senses as something unbearable and monstrous and to attack those who are eager to bring them the noble instruction that will make them better than they were before. They allow only their own desires to have the victory. Now a necessary consideration had almost escaped my notice, even though it is especially relevant and connected with the interpretation of the passage before us.

The Jews served only the letter of Moses and put their own interpretation on what was done in type until the time came "to set things right."[194] They placed absolutely no value on the message of gospel instruction, and they thought that they ought to consider its ministers more burdensome than their most bitter foes. Others, pursuing a different error, exchanged the ineffable glory of God for the creature. (I am referring to the Gentiles.) They did not gladly receive the word that could enlighten them. They were absorbed, as it were, in their ancient evils, and they considered their ignorance most precious. They were extremely hesitant to depart from the disease they grew up with. Since this is the nature of the case, who could doubt that the Savior's disciples would be hated by the Jews and rejected by those who were sick with the error of the Greeks? They were unwelcome, or rather they were unbearable to those who had chosen to devote themselves to pleasure and to honor the fleeting life of luxury. But if the Savior's disciples were going to consider being hated by those we just mentioned to be a burdensome thing, and if they were eager to pursue extravagantly the affection of those with such diseases, would it not be utterly clear and obvious to all that they would not **[588]** be setting forth the beneficial word to anyone at all but would be devoting their mind to vanity and restraining the rebuke that comes from the boldness given by God, and would be speaking and explaining whatever would please each person?

Therefore, the admonition not to seek too eagerly to be loved and to disregard incurring the hatred of some is necessary if the admonition is to be profitable for them. We see Paul too doing and saying this clearly, "Am I now seeking human approval, or God's approval? Or am I trying to please people? If I still wanted to please people, I would not be a servant of Christ."[195] And when he rebuked someone in Corinth and learned that he was unbearably hurt by it, he said, "If I cause you pain, who is there to make me glad but the one whom I have pained? For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation and brings no regret."[196] There can be no doubt whatsoever that a message that is aimed at the pleasure of the hearers will flatter the world rather than benefit it because it will not set any useful knowledge before it. But the ones who believe the words of the Savior will not conduct ministry this way. They will prefer to please him instead and will consider themselves spiritually wealthy when they are hated by those who have chosen to treat virtue as an enemy.

Therefore, he says, when the hatred of the world that you have kindled sometimes attacks your good reputation, overcome and remove

[194]Heb 9:10.

[195]Gal 1:10.

[196]2 Cor 2:2; 7:10.

this stumbling block by refusing to take great delight in the honors bestowed by those who love the world, if they cannot endure the word that benefits them. Do not view the hatred as a burden at all, since I experienced it before you. I am your Lord and teacher. **[589]** I do not think it is difficult to show that those who preferred earthly matters and despised heavenly blessings hated Christ to their own destruction. He said in the Gospels to certain people, "The world cannot hate you, but it hates me because I testify against it that its works are evil."[197] He sets before them in this statement a description of himself as an example for the holy apostles, and he commands them to follow the track laid down when he clearly said to others somewhere, "Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you."[198]

15:19 "If you belonged to the world, the world would love you as its own. Because you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world—therefore the world hates you."

By his skill he miraculously makes it easy to bear what is utterly unbearable and gives them delight in what may well cause immeasurable distress. Being hated by anyone is truly a burden because it sometimes burdens one with injury and unexpected plots. But even this is sweet when it happens for the sake of God and for godliness, and it supplies the clearest proof that the person whom others treat this way is not of the world. Just as there is physical kinship, so also I think we will find a kinship of behavior, and the identity and complete similarity of conduct is sufficient to undermine a blood relationship. "Every creature loves its like," as it is written, "and people stick close to those like themselves."[199] Where similarity of behavior reinforces the law of love for one another, a holy person will dwell with another holy person, **[590]** and they will quite gladly be identical and joined in friendship. It is the same with a profane person. That is why the law of Moses made a distinction between sacred and profane and kept them from being mixed or combined with each other, according to the principle of love. "Bad company ruins good morals,"[200] and differences of behavior are at war with each other, and wills that are divided and aim at opposite objects all but accuse each other, with each one admiring its own actions. Those who love virtue, then, must be hated for the very things for which they are admired: rebuking vice and highlighting the shame of the wicked by contrasting it with their own behavior. After all, when what is good is displayed next to it, what is evil is necessarily put to shame. That is why I think those who are not committed to the same way of life rage against those who love virtue. Therefore, he does not allow his disciples to grieve, even if they find themselves unbearable to the world because of their love for virtue and their reverence for him. On the contrary, he explains that they should rejoice and take the world's hatred as proof that they are glorious in the sight of God and worthy of his word. See how perilous he showed it would be for them not to endure suffering (which is what they likely would have preferred). Being hated by some is certainly not without its price. Nevertheless, God does not excuse us from it. Rather, there is great profit in choosing to endure the hatred. If any are hated by those who have set their mind on the affairs of the world, they are considered to be outside the world. So whoever is not

[197]Jn 7:7.
[198]Mt 5:11-12.
[199]Sir 13:15-16.
[200]1 Cor 15:33.

hated must be understood to be bound by the evils of the world.

What then did Christ intend by these words? He wanted his disciples to preach his word with boldness and not to allow their hearers to go without getting any benefit. He did not want them to have regard for their reputation among sinners and among those who have chosen to disobey the divine proclamation, which might have led the disciples to withhold the word that could persuade them to come to their senses. **[591]** Rather they should pass over the harm that often comes from being hated and offer bold and fearless counsel, being afraid of nothing and considering nothing more important than pleasing God. This is what Paul does most excellently when he writes, "Am I now seeking human approval, or God's approval? Or am I trying to please people? If I were still pleasing people, I would not be a servant of Christ."[201] It is not possible—not possible—to please the wicked and God. How could both coexist, since the will of each is divided by a great dissimilarity? The one aims at virtue, the other at vice. The one who wishes to serve God alone and considers nothing more important than reverence toward him must be in conflict with those who love the world, whenever such a person persuades them to consider the consequences of the world's indecency. Advice that calls for different behavior is completely intolerable to lovers of pleasure, just as severe but beneficial remedies certainly are to those who are afflicted by bodily suffering.

15:20 "Remember the word that I said to you, 'Servants are not greater than their master.' If they persecuted me, they will persecute you; if they kept my word, they will keep yours also."

Earlier, he demonstrated quite eloquently that being hated is honorable if it is justified by the occasion. It is quite bearable—yes, even thrice longed-for—when it happens for the sake of God, who can make us superior to our stumbling blocks. Now he beneficially removes what he knows, as God, may persuade them to shrink back from devoting all their energies to preaching the heavenly doctrine. Disgrace and danger in many cases follow those who set their hand to teaching **[592]** whenever their words are not agreeable to those they admonish. Persecution happens to them as well, and their word is sometimes not received. So he urges them to be ready to handle these things with zeal and courage. He warns them ahead of time all over the place, as it were, of the wickedness of the ones they will teach. He indicated this in another passage where he said, "Woe to the world because of stumbling blocks! Occasions for stumbling are bound to come."[202] He subjects every aspect of the passage to careful arrangement, presenting himself as an example so that they may not long for something greater and be caught in shame in some other way but may rather trail behind the Lord's glory, as they must, and take care not to elevate themselves above him. Accordingly, he indicates that they will surely suffer by saying, "Servants are not greater than their master." Wretched people attacked me with an unbridled tongue, he says, and leaving no kind of abuse untried, they called me demon possessed, a drunkard and the fruit of fornication. But I did not immediately seek to punish them. I was not cut to the heart by their insults, and I gave the hearers the word of salvation in return. Therefore, let none of you inappropriately seek to be greater or scorn the status of the Lord, who lowered himself to such humiliation for us and for the profit of all. He therefore makes people superior to the harsh words and unholiness of those who always find fault, just as the blessed prophet

[201]Gal 1:10.

[202]Mt 18:7.

Jeremiah said on this very point when he was harassed, "My strength has failed me because of those who curse me."[203] The divinely inspired Paul has illustrated this even more clearly in himself when he struggled mightily against the unholiness of those who insulted him. "When reviled, we bless," he says, "when slandered, we speak kindly."[204] The desire to prevail over such things **[593]** is the work of a mind that is poor in spirit, as it is written,[205] and adorned with a truly moderate temper. Patience and long-suffering spring up and arise at the same time, as from a good root. But the inability to endure words of provocation or any kind of dishonor from anyone would be clear proof of a mind that loves boasting and a disposition that is not completely freed from the love of worldly glory. What injury could insults do to those who are lovers of modesty? How could the reviling of anyone be distressing to one who does not long for worldly glory?

He reasonably exhorts us to have a mind that is superior to this vain glory (I mean glory that is honored by the world) and to go beyond such things. He forearms them with a necessary safeguard, as it were, that they may exhibit the right will in these cases, and he sets before them an argument that thrusts aside the outrage of the situation, so to speak. We mentioned this argument at the beginning: that they would trail behind the honor of the Lord and joyfully confront everything that comes in its own time until they possess what is well pleasing on account of God. They would not be bowed down by dishonor in useless hesitation or draw back from bold teaching and neglect the divine commands when they are being bitterly reviled by someone. Instead, they would lay hold of love for their brothers and rush to help the erring in every way.

Once he has persuaded them to shun the fleeting glory of the world that is under their feet, he makes another useful and necessary contention. "If they persecuted me," he says, "they will persecute you." This has a meaning that is related to his first statement. He still persuades them to endure suffering, and he takes away in advance the weakness of the reflections that usually arise in us. **[594]** There was no doubt that the Savior's disciples would stumble upon the anger of those who persecute the truth and fall into the terrors of persecution. But it was certainly right and very reasonable for them to consider that when they valued the word of Christ more than their reputation, they would certainly participate in the riches of his mercy so that nothing at all would get in the way of such an intense zeal on their part. They would be above all trouble and danger, undergoing nothing that is the least bit grievous, but rather delighting in the honors that all would bestow on them since they are ministering to them the word of salvation. And it is not an inappropriate goal that those who are eager to call people to eternal life and are found to supply their hearers with graces from God should expect this and seek to be among those so honored. Since people turn the inclination of their own will wherever they wish and direct it to suit their own will and pleasure, he had to show them that those whose minds are opposed to the truth and who are overcome by wicked pleasures are bound to consciously oppose those who call them away from their pleasures. Instruction with this goal is not welcome for those who love pleasure. So he had to, as it were, show them that they should expect those who had become their enemies to persecute them and insult them and devise for them every kind of trial.

Christ, then, commands them to encounter this bravely, not denying that it will happen. Rather, because they ought to be brave, he proclaims ahead of time that these things will take place. "If they persecuted me," he says,

[203]Jer 15:10.
[204]1 Cor 4:12-13.
[205]Mt 5:3.

"they will persecute you." It is as if he said, I am the creator of all and have all things under my control, things in heaven and things on earth, but I did not put a bridle on their rage, nor did I restrain **[595]** the emotion of each of my hearers, as if it were an affront to me. Rather I permitted them to choose what seemed right to them and to do whatever they wished. And when I was persecuted I endured it, though I had the power to prevent it. So when you too are persecuted, enduring for the moment the aversion of those who hate you, do not be too upset with the thanklessness of those you have helped but follow my *oikonomia* and pursue the same goals I did, that you may share in similar glory. After all, those who suffer with me will also reign with me.

By adding the third statement, "If they kept my word, they will keep yours also," he does not allow them to be disheartened when their teaching is sometimes not received. And he does this exceedingly well. He who has been appointed to this work thinks that he has lost his labor if some do not want to believe his word. But that is not so. Let no one think it is. And why? Once the adviser has spoken and set forth the knowledge of what is good, he has done what is in his power. The rest is up to the disposition of the hearers. It is easy for them to turn to whatever each one wishes, either to obedience or the opposite. Those who are our guides in the most excellent matters must not shrink back from sowing the word that can, by God's power, help even those who reject it. They can set right what we cannot by their faithful ministration, which is what we find happening and being put to good use in the distribution of the talents. One person received ten, another five, another two, and still another received one and refused to invest it, burying the talent in the ground. Therefore, he heard, "You wicked and lazy slave! You ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and on my return **[596]** I would have received what was my own with interest."[206] Those who are trained in working the land and intend to do so, once they break up the ground with plows and pour the seed in the furrow, do not ascribe the rest to their own skill but entrust it to God's power and grace—I mean the taking root of what was cast into the earth and the nourishment of it to its mature fruit. In the same way I think the one who explains noble truths should merely distribute the word and leave the rest to God.

The Savior administers his exhortation to his disciples on this matter as a medicine that cures lack of spirit and depression. Never decide to shrink back from teaching, he says, even if some, once they have been taught, place no value on the teaching that was given to them. Since you find that even my words are sometimes not received by many, do not strive to surpass my glory but follow me here as well and leave your despondency behind. This teaching was something the disciples really needed since they were about to preach the divine and saving word to people everywhere. Indeed, the divinely inspired Paul, appointed as an apostle by Christ, has shown himself to us to be this kind of person and is often seen to behave courageously in these situations. It is easy to demonstrate that he thought he should despise the love of glory and think nothing of persecution, while he considered it very important that he not be too faint-hearted, even if some entirely rejected the word once it was sown in them. He writes to certain people, "You are wise in Christ, but we are fools for Christ. We are weak, but you are strong. We are in disrepute, but you are held in honor. To the present hour we are hungry and thirsty."[207] And again on the same subject, "We have become like the rubbish of the world," he says, **[597]** "the dregs of all things, to this very

[206]Mt 25:26-27.
[207]1 Cor 4:10-11.

day."[208] Do you see how he is superior to worldly reputation because of the Savior's command? Displaying his nobility in the midst of persecution, he said, "Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?"[209] And he writes to others, "To say the same things is not troublesome to me, and for you it is a safeguard."[210] To the Galatians he says, "My little children, for whom I am again in the pain of childbirth until Christ is formed in you."[211] Listen to how he does not hesitate in the least to cycle through the same statements so that when the first one that he gave in the beginning is not received, he aptly says that he experienced labor pains for some until the formation of Christ should appear in them. His message surely brought this about, refashioning his hearers into love for God and into the image of Christ through faith.

15:21 "But they will do all these things to you on account of my name, because they do not know him who sent me."

He maintains that there will be no other reason motivating those who choose to act irreverently against the holy apostles except for his name alone. This is a reproach to those who honor God and a pretext for hostility on the part of those who do not know him. It is clear to all that no one would suffer something for the sake of God without reward, since a glorious crown will be stored up for them. So he incites them again to courage and makes their mind steadfast, putting aside the misery of what they can expect will happen to them for the hope of reward. He shows them that the terrible events themselves are profitable and an answer to prayer. He rids of all terrors the very prospect that might paralyze some even when its arrival is merely contemplated, and he persuades his disciples to greet it with great joy. Indeed, when they were once summoned to the unholy council of the Jews and **[598]** their bodies were beaten with blows for the sake of Christ, they left "the presence of the Sanhedrin rejoicing," as it is written, "that they were considered worthy to suffer dishonor for the sake of the name."[212] And they earnestly enjoined us to suffer for this as well and not to be troubled by it at all, even if we encounter distress for the sake of Christ. "Let none of you suffer," he says, "as a murderer, a thief, a criminal, or even as a mischief maker. Yet if any of you suffers as a Christian, do not consider it a disgrace but glorify God because you bear this name." Suffering is quite pleasant, and danger is sweet, when love for God is the reason for it.

Consider how here again he shows himself to be one with his Father. He says that neither the Jews nor those who were about to persecute the preachers of Christ's name knew either the Father or the Son. All who think they should dishonor the Son admittedly hate the Father, not as though they were sinning against another nature but because they are raging against the very dignity of the nature of divinity. No one could be convicted of insulting the Son who respected the nature of the Father. If someone has any knowledge of what the Father actually is, how could that person be ignorant of what he has begotten of himself? And who damages the fruit that is begotten from a plant without insulting the plant itself? There is no doubt, then, that sin against the Son is proof of ignorance of God the Father.

Now since he did not say that they do not know "my Father," but, "him who sent me," I think that he wants to intimate something like the following. His aim, it seems, was to show

[208] 1 Cor 4:13.
[209] Rom 8:35.
[210] Phil 3:1.
[211] Gal 4:19.
[212] Acts 5:41.

that those who persecuted his devoted followers clearly tied their heads, as it were, in a noose of double transgression. They are in effect caught, he says, being ignorant of the one **[599]** from whom I came. They will not only justly be convicted of atheism, but they will be found to disparage the very wisdom of God the Father. After all, if he sent his Son to raise what had fallen, to renew what had worn out and to restore life to those in the world, while they irreverently oppose and attack those who want to preach the restorer of the world, how will they not clearly be convicted of being ignorant and of opposing him who sent me? When he speaks of being "sent," he evokes for us the entire significance of his *oikonomia* in the flesh. Those who do not know "him who sent me" are by this very fact ignorant of God and dishonor the mystery of my sending.

15:22 "If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have sin; but now they have no excuse for their sin."

We must understand the meaning of the passage in two ways. If one were to take what is said here to be directed against both the Greeks and the Jews, we give the following explanation: If the divine and heavenly proclamation (I mean the gospel) had not come to everyone on earth, showing each person the way of salvation and making plain the works of righteousness, the complete ignorance of what pleases God would perhaps be a good reason to pardon each person who was not eager to practice virtue. This ignorance offers the defense that they deserve a pardon. But since the word of explanation was given to all, what would the basis for their pardon be, or what explanation could anyone give to the judge when they are accused of the most shameful crimes after they had this knowledge? But if the Lord said this only about the Jews, since they had often listened to him teaching **[600]** and they were aware of everything he commanded them to think and do, you may understand it in this way: They will not put up with your teaching, he says, but they will inflict trials and persecutions on you and devise every kind of trouble, and they will be inflamed by bitterness to an unjust hatred, though they can cite no transgression on your part, but they will blame you only for your love for me. They will use sophisms, as it were, to justify the cruelty of their madness and to diminish the shame of their luxury, and they will surely cite Moses and the books of Moses and pretend to defend, as it were, the laws of their fathers. But if I had not come and set forth teaching that is superior to the command given through Moses; if I had not fulfilled it by many words, since it was now the time for the types to pass away along with the outline of shadow and sketches, and the hour had come for the truth to shine; if I had not demonstrated this from the law itself, clearly saying, "If you believed Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote about me";[213] if I had not shown my word to be in agreement with the testimony of the prophets and the power of my advent to have been spoken of and proclaimed in advance—then they would have had reasonable grounds for their madness against me and you. But since nothing has been left out, but everything necessary has been said, the explanation they will devise as an excuse for such naked sin is vain.

I think that this understanding harmonizes appropriately with the words of the Savior. When he shows that terrible charges will be leveled against those who sin against them and says that those who show such audacity will one day be punished, he removes the greater part of their grief and wisely steals away what would likely distress them immeasurably. The conviction that those who commit violence will pay the penalty for their crime sometimes makes the violence bearable for those who are

[213] Jn 5:46.

injured by it. **[601]** Knowing this, the Lord of all says, "Vengeance is mine; I will repay, says the Lord."[214] And the blessed Paul himself, when he was struck by one of the high priests, had no other consolation than this for the bitterness of his suffering. What did he say? "God will strike you, you white-washed wall!"[215] This, therefore, is a medicine for human weakness—I mean the expectation that those who choose to do wrong will be punished. The Lord, however, is superior and on a higher level than human pettiness. "When he was abused, he did not return abuse; when he suffered, he did not threaten," as it is written.[216] When he was struck, he said nothing vulgar, and neither did he threaten the one who dared to hit him but with the greatest mildness and forbearance he answered, "If I have spoken wrongly, testify to the wrong. But if I have spoken rightly, why do you strike me?"[217] Therefore, the word of the prophets is true: "Who in the clouds can be compared to the Lord? Who among the sons of God will be like the Lord?"[218]

15:23 "Whoever hates me hates my Father also."

He clearly levels the charge of atheism against those who, in the unholiness of their thoughts and the estrangement of their mind, have chosen to hate him. And the charge is true. Those who dishonor the Son will not refrain from sinning against the Father; they think that it is all right to hate. Those who disparage the light of the sun for being useless take the charge of uselessness further and render their verdict against the sun itself, from which the light comes. And those who despise the scent of flowers will surely transfer that charge to that from which the scent is born. In the same way, I think, the charge will apply both to the Only Begotten and the one who begat him. It is not possible—not possible—for people to censure **[602]** that which comes from something and praise that from which it comes. That is why Christ said to the Jews, "A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit."[219] Then he told them to make this accurate and blameless judgment in the matter: "Make the tree bad, and its fruit bad."[220] Whatever might be true of one of these, I maintain, will necessarily extend to both. Since there is one nature, how could the deficiency not certainly apply to both, even though it can be manifested differently? Whatever one may do to the outflow of some fountain, one would surely do the same to the fountain itself. That is why Christ says, "Whoever hates me hates my Father also." For our benefit he applies to the person of the Father whatever people may attempt against him. With these words he equally assures us that he is no different from him because of their identity in every respect. In addition, he strikes his hearers with terror and shows them that the sin of choosing to hate him is dangerous. And he insists that those who refuse to worship him will surely be defenseless and easy prey, since they also rage against the very person of the Father. After all, he will surely be angry along with his offspring, since he too is insulted.

How could it not be utterly clear that when this truth was received by faith, it made the holy apostles extremely bold?

At the same time, Christ accomplished another necessary and wise feat. And I will tell you what it is. Some thought, in their incomparably demented mind and excessive madness, that when they sin against the Son and oppose the words of the Savior, they please God, the

[214]Rom 12:19.
[215]Acts 23:3.
[216]1 Pet 2:23.
[217]Jn 18:23.
[218]Ps 89:6 (Ps 88:7 LXX).
[219]Mt 7:18.
[220]Mt 12:33.

giver of the law, **[603]** and that by granting the need for constant victory to the prophecies of Moses, they are found to be genuine preservers of love for God. It was necessary, therefore, to show their pride to be empty and to teach the world that by opposing the laws of the Savior they have set themselves up against the entire divine nature, so to speak, and insulted it in the Son. They did this by their great and inexcusable disobedience and unbelief, which he rightly maintains applies not only to his own person but also to those who preach the word on his behalf and because of him. Therefore, those who try to oppose the holy apostles are enemies of God and insolent toward him, setting themselves up against the entire ineffable and unspeakable nature. After all, they preach not themselves but the God and Lord of all, that is, Christ.

15:24 "If I had not done among them the works that no one else did, they would not have sin. But now they have seen and hated both me and my Father."

Christ shows nothing less with these words than that no excuse is left for the Jews to explain why they should not be punished and suffer incurable distress. Clearly nothing that could profit them has been left undone. They have been presented with a long discourse by which they could have attained salvation quite easily, and miracles were displayed to them that no one in the world had ever seen. What saint ever competed with the miracles of the Savior? Since the Jews were so far removed from choosing to admire him that they even preferred to hate him because of their unholy mind, how could the burden of the charge not be unbearable for them? I suppose it would have been far better if they had never heard his wise words or come into view of such unspeakable wonder-working. **[604]** Perhaps then they could have devised an elaborate plea for pardon: We have not heard or seen anything necessary to lead us to faith. But since they did not learn from one of the holy prophets but from Christ himself, who came from above and was sent to us; and since they saw amazing miracles such as Christ opening the eyes of the blind man even though no one else was ever able to do such a thing—what can excuse the madness of the Jews? What explanation will take away their punishment? Though they had heard and seen, they hated both the Son and the Father. How did they hate them? They did not honor the word that came from the Father through the Son, and they failed to give the admiration that the works of the divine nature deserved, so they are caught in glaring irreverence toward the nature of God, which accomplished the works. The Father himself was surely with the Son as he did the miracles, not as one person working wonders through another but as one who is in the Son because of the identity of their nature and the immutability of their substance. The wretched Jews, then, are thankless and guilty of extreme ignorance since they placed no value on the pure teaching of the Savior and, on top of that, they dishonored the nature of the Father through the Son and in the Son, even though it wrought wonders beyond imagination that would likely have been able to lead and call even the hard and stubborn to understand what was reasonable and necessary in order to honor God.

15:25 "It was to fulfill the word that is written in their law, 'They hated me without cause.'"

He shows clearly that not even this was unknown to the law, which proclaimed everything in advance. **[605]** But we do not say that the law foretold these things so that the hatred of the Jews might unjustly attach itself to the Son and the Father. Rather, since they were already going to do these things, the divine and holy law foretold it to show that the

Spirit was not ignorant of anything that would come to pass. It is written in the book of Psalms, in the person of Christ rebuking the madness of the Jews, "They hated me with an unjust hatred."[221] After all, how is their hatred not unjust? Surely they were upset with him without cause. Their hatred was so far from justified concerning the nature of the works that were done among them that they ought rather to have loved him with the highest devotion and to have delighted in following his will. Let the one who defends the disobedience of the Jews step forward and tell us what pretext they have for their hatred. Which of Christ's works deserved hatred or enmity? His deliverance from death and decay? His freeing us from the devil's violence and destruction of the tyranny of sin and restoration of what was enslaved to sonship with God? His lifting up into righteousness (by his love for the human race and his forgetfulness of injury) of those who were dead in sin? His making us sharers in the Holy Spirit and the divine nature and throwing open to us the dwelling place of the holy angels and making heaven accessible to human beings? How is it just to hate him who is the supplier and provider of such things to us? We should rather bless him aloud with praise and repay him with ceaseless thanksgiving. But nothing, I think, converts the stubborn Jew to think aright. He hated without cause him whom he ought to have loved with his whole heart and crowned with the honor of obedience. Yet in this passage the Lord usefully shows that he was not unaware of the malice of the Jews **[606]** but that he foretold that it would turn out the way he knew it would. Nevertheless he acted with God-befitting gentleness and forgiveness. He set before them the word that calls to salvation, though they were ill-disposed to receive it, and he strengthened by his miracles their confession of faith in him, if there were any who were good and noble. He helped his disciples greatly by this as well so that they might forget the wrongs done to them and extend the word of salvation even to those who were trying to disparage them and by this very act show that they were following in the footsteps of the virtue that first shone in him. If there is anything good, it is in Christ first and then us; from him all blessings flow.

15:26 "When the Paraclete comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, he will testify on my behalf. You also are to testify because you have been with me from the beginning."

He says that both he and the Father have been hated by the ignorant Jews, and this without cause and for no good reason. Now he profitably introduces the Spirit, adding to the Word the fullness of the holy Trinity and showing that the Spirit was dishonored with him so that the spectators of the miracles, who had raged so completely against the Son, may also be shown guilty of disparaging the power of the highest essence of all, which is beyond nature. They did this by rejecting Christ, even though he performed amazing miracles to give them proof, and by what they did. They blasphemed against him, which is shocking even to contemplate. And yet, one might say, O senseless Jew, Christ performed miracles for you **[607]** that exceeded the glory of Moses and the glory of every saint. The Lord's statement "If I had not done among them the works that no one else did"[222] conveys such a meaning to us. You crown the servant and minister of lesser things (I mean Moses) with such illustrious honors, but you do not blush to reject in your ignorance the worker of incomparably superior and far greater deeds, even though he brought the

[221]Ps 24:19 (LXX).

[222]Jn 15:24.

ancient oracles of Moses' prophecy to fulfillment and enclosed the shadow with the truth. Therefore, our Lord Jesus Christ necessarily made mention of the Spirit along with himself and the Father. And he also shows that what we said earlier was true, that is, that if any hate the Son they surely also hate the Father from whom he came. How or in what way, consider further.

Look—look—he calls the "Spirit of truth" (that is, of himself) the "Paraclete," and he says that he "proceeds from the Father." Just as the Spirit belongs to the Son by nature, being in him and proceeding through him, so also the Spirit belongs to the Father. The attributes of their substance surely cannot be divided, because the Spirit is common to both. Let none who are accustomed to godlessness lead us with ignorant language to the mistaken notion that the Son fulfills a servant's task when he delivers the Spirit to creation from the Father. (Some in their ignorance are not afraid to say this.) Instead we should believe that he sends the Spirit to sanctify his holy disciples because the Spirit belongs to him, just as the Spirit certainly belongs to God the Father. Indeed, if they think that they are somehow thinking and speaking shrewdly when they introduce the Son to us as a minister and servant in this passage, **[608]** surely it follows that we should say to them, "You blind fools!"[223] Do you not perceive that you are going back and taking away the glory of the Only Begotten when you string together miserable arguments from your ignorance? If the Son supplies the Spirit from the Father, and he is therefore classified as a servant, how could it not be necessary to confess that the Spirit is altogether foreign to his essence, perhaps greater and far superior to him, if matters stand as you in your ignorance suppose? After all, if the Son does not proceed from the Father, that is, from his essence, as you maintain, how could the Spirit not be understood to be superior to the Son? Then what will we say when we hear him say about the Spirit, "He will glorify me, because he will take what is mine and declare it to you."[224]

In addition to what we have already said, we must proceed to the following. If you think that the Son carries out a ministerial service when he supplies to us what is foreign to himself, that is, the Spirit who comes from God the Father and is holy by nature, then the Son is not holy by nature but by participation just like we are. According to the ignorance of the godless, the Son is declared to be foreign to the essence of the Father, from which the Spirit, who is supplied by him, proceeds. It will therefore be possible that he might someday fall away from the holiness that is in him, since the Spirit does not belong to the Son, but the Son has an adopted sanctification just like creatures. If something is acquired as an addition, surely it can be removed with the permission of the one who gave it. Who would not flee from such dogmas? I think our explanation is more fitting.

The truth is dear to us, as are the dogmas that flow from the truth. We will not follow those people, but **[609]** we will follow in the footsteps of the faith of the holy fathers and say that the Paraclete, that is, the Holy Spirit, belongs to the Son and is not introduced from the outside or acquired by him as by those who are capable of receiving holiness. They came into being from nonexistence, but the Spirit is of the same substance as him, just as he is of course of the same substance as the Father. In this way the meaning of the church's dogmas will not veer off into polytheistic mythology on us, but the holy Trinity will be united in one divine nature. In this passage, then, he shows the unity of substance (I mean between his substance and that of God the Father). He says

[223]Mt 23:17.

[224]Jn 16:14.

that the Paraclete is "the Spirit of truth," and then he declares that he "proceeds from the Father," thus clearly and unambiguously rebuking the enemy of Christ for being completely at enmity with God. Whoever decides to rage against the Son would reasonably be understood to have sinned against the one from whom he came.

He says, "When the Paraclete comes, the Spirit of truth (that is, of me) who proceeds from the Father, he will testify on my behalf." How will he testify? When he works miracles in you and through you, he will be a faithful and true witness of my God-befitting authority and of the greatness of my power. The one who works in you is my Spirit. And just as he is mine, so also he belongs to God the Father. Therefore, we must understand that those who work miracles through the one good Spirit to confirm our faith are insulted too, since they are in the role of Christ, in whom dwelt not only a part of the ineffable divine nature, according to Paul, but "the whole fullness" thereof "bodily."[225]

When the Spirit testifies, he says that you too will testify along with him. You have been eyewitnesses and spectators of what I have done among my own, since you were always with me as disciples. **[610]**

16:1 "I have said these things to you to keep you from stumbling."

After setting before his disciples the madness of the Jews, the Savior was perhaps about to add to his discussion of this matter that these wretched people will reach such a level of disobedience and will so stubbornly refuse to listen and will progress to such a hatred of God that even if there were two witnesses of his glory, they would still not be willing to accept it—even though the law explicitly declares that every matter that is testified to by two or three voices must be believed and received without hesitation.[226] But there is a good reason that he does not say this at the moment. He would have brought them very low and thrown the disciples into despair and brought about the inevitable entrance in them of fear and cowardice. They would probably have thought among themselves, If the people of the Jews will never be persuaded but will dismiss the Paraclete, even though he astonishes them with unimaginable miracles, and then they will be caught hating Christ, no less, and the Father with him, why should we spend our labor in vain? Why should we not rid ourselves of trouble and prefer silence over teaching those who will not hear? He is not unaware that the disciples would likely think this, so he skillfully conceals whatever would have been too distressing in his explanation and would have produced fear and cowardice in the task of teaching. Instead, he beneficially turns the discussion into an exhortation to prepare and brace themselves courageously for the results that they can expect to happen. If something comes upon people suddenly and unexpectedly, it can trouble even the most **[611]** stable soul. But in the case of that which is anticipated to come, its arrival is gentler and its weight is easier to bear, since it has already been foreseen and has lost its edge due to the expectation that the suffering is sure to happen. I think that Christ intends to indicate something like this. If I have already worked such wonders, he says, and you witnessed it, the Paraclete will also work wonders among you. If the audacity of the Jews' madness does not diminish but remains the same or even gets worse, do not stumble, he says, when you find yourselves enduring it, but always remember my words, "A disciple is not above the teacher, nor a slave above the master."[227]

[225]Col 2:9.

[226]Deut 19:15.

[227]Mt 10:24.

16:2 "They will put you out of the synagogues. Indeed, an hour is coming when those who kill you will think that by doing so they are offering worship to God."

He brings up a warning of danger regarding the most dreadful threat of all, so to speak. But he does not intend to arouse a cowardly panic in his disciples. It would not make sense for him to do this, since he wants to urge them to great boldness in preaching the gospel message. Instead he wants them to thrust aside the worst fear, since it is already anticipated and for that reason has lost its edge. He wants them to gain complete victory over every evil, and to think nothing of it even if they encounter what seem to be the most unbearable calamities. What loss could the lesser evil inflict on those who do not fear the greater? And how could those who know how to overcome the worst fears be terrified by the rest? In order that they may have a mind that is prepared to undergo everything with great joy and to endure the attack of the Jews' madness to the point where they do not even fear a cruel death when it is at hand, he not only tells them what will continually happen, that the plots and opposition of the Jews will not stop [**612**] at merely putting them out of the synagogues, but he warns them ahead of time that their wickedness will sink to such a level of cruelty that they will think that their extreme inhumanity toward them is the road that leads to piety toward God. Now it is clear that those who held fast to the love of Christ were put out of the synagogues by the Jews and endured this penalty at the beginning of their work. The Evangelist says, "Many, even of the authorities, believed in him. But because of the Pharisees they did not confess it, for fear that they would be put out of the synagogue,"[228] and again, "The scribes and the Pharisees had already agreed that anyone who confessed him to be the Christ would be put out of the synagogue."[229] But if any think that the malice of the Jews is unbearable, he says, let them understand that their opposition to you will not stop there. Do not be distressed at all, he says, even though this suffering should happen to you. Their audacity will sink to such a level of wickedness that they will consider your death to be God-pleasing worship. Indeed, that is what we will find happened in the case of Saint Stephen, the first fruits of the martyrs, and in the case of the divinely inspired Paul. They trumped up a charge of blasphemy against Stephen and, feigning a zeal that loves God, they stoned him to death. And some of the Jews were so angry at the holy and most wise Paul that they "bound themselves by an oath neither to eat nor drink until they killed him."[230] We will find this written in the Acts of the Holy Apostles. The prediction, then, is good and extremely helpful, moderating the fear of these terrible events and forging the disciples' courage anew, as if they had already suffered these things. The heat of the danger will be cooled ahead of time [**613**] when the sufferers know about it in advance, and that makes its entrance weaker.

16:3 "And they will do this because they have not known the Father or me."

He has shown that the zeal of the Jews is "not enlightened," as Paul says.[231] Instead, it has wandered off and departed from the right way, even though their actions, at least in their own eyes, seem to have been done for God. These wretched people thought that by arming themselves with the command of Moses they pleased God, the giver of the law, and they supposed that by opposing the prophetic utterances of Christ they pleased God in no

[228]Jn 12:42.

[229]Jn 9:22.
[230]Acts 23:21.
[231]Rom 10:2.

small degree. That is why they so vigorously opposed the preachers of the gospel message, but they did not realize they had fallen into utter foolishness and that by dishonoring the Son they were sinning against God the Father himself, or rather, they were convicted of complete ignorance of the nature of the Father and of the Son who sprang from him. And, what is bizarre, they were eager to crown the most wise Moses with the highest honors as a minister of the law that was given by angels, but they did not hesitate to heap the most extreme scorn upon our Lord Jesus Christ, who expounded the ineffable will of God and who said clearly, "I do nothing on my own, but the Father who sent me has himself given me a commandment about what to say and what to speak."[232] This despite the fact that God the Father worked the miracles with him and testified with an audible voice, crying out distinctly and saying, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased."[233] There is therefore no question that if any choose to make a bitter attack against those who bring the divine message, they will be completely ignorant of the holy and consubstantial Trinity. **[614]** Those who rob the Word, who sprang from the Father, of the glory that is due him (at least in their own mind) do not know the Father either. Is it not unquestionably accepted, at least by those who are able to deal sensibly with the nature of things, that since he is of the same substance as the Father he will surely speak in agreement with the will of the Father; and since he has a common glory the dignity of the Father will also be insulted when he is attacked? With these words, then, our Lord Jesus Christ defends himself and rebukes the audacity of the Jews, imposing a death sentence on those who dishonor him through their cruelty to the holy apostles. That is because the verbal transgression will apply not strictly to the apostles, but it will mount up to him who gave them the service of divine apostleship, just as he once said to the holy Samuel concerning the Israelites, "They have not rejected you; they have rejected me."[234]

It is a dangerous thing, then, to refuse to give the saints the honor they truly deserve, since a verbal transgression against them reaches to him who sent them.

16:4 "But I have said these things to you so that when their hour comes you may remember that I told you about them."

He insists that he has told them about these things for no other reason than that they might know that when they encounter the assaults of sin for his sake they will surely gain glory from it. I did not tell you this in advance, he says, to unnerve your mind ahead of time or instill premature fear by the expectation of suffering, but rather to give you foreknowledge that you will obtain a double benefit from this. **[615]** First, you will remember that I told you ahead of time, and you will marvel at my foreknowledge. The time of danger will contribute to the secure assurance of your faith. After all, how could one who knows the future not be God by nature? In addition, those who are prepared and know beforehand that they will suffer will have less fear. They will easily overcome everything that seems terrifying, and they will have an undisturbed mind in the midst of their troubles. I think that sudden and unexpected suffering provides a more bitter attack. For example, the psalmist says, "I was prepared, and I was not dismayed."[235] Thus, for beneficial and necessary reasons, he commands the disciples to remember the one who foretold to them what would come to pass. There was no doubt that they would believe him to be true God for this

[232]Jn 8:28; 12:49.
[233]Mt 3:17.
[234]1 Sam 8:7 (1 Kings 8:7 LXX).
[235]Ps 118:60 (LXX).

reason—since omniscience is an attribute of the true God—and that they would believe that he will easily deliver them from what terrifies them.

16:4-6 "I did not say these things to you from the beginning, because I was with you. But now I am going to him who sent me; yet none of you asks me, 'Where are you going?' But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled you heart."

Christ considered ahead of time another very useful and necessary point. There was no doubt that, since he called the disciples in the beginning to be with him and spend time with him, and since they experienced great miracles and contemplated his incomparable power and authority, they supposed that they would overcome every trial and immediately triumph over every fearful adversity. After all, how could they doubt any longer or be faint in heart when they had received the favor of him who can do all these things? But **[616]** Christ mentioned ahead of time that they would fall into unexpected dangers so that they would not be overwhelmed with dismay by this as they reflect and say to themselves, Were our initial hopes disappointed, and did we miss our goal? We thought that we were called to every blessing, but now we have come upon such great misfortune. So the Lord had to explain why he did not mention this at first, saying, "I did not say these things to you from the beginning, because I was with you." While he was still with them he sufficed to preserve their peace of mind and rescue them from every trial and give them the appropriate instruction and assistance in everything that happened to them. But since he is going away to the Father, he profitably and at the proper time explains the inevitable approach of what they could expect would happen. Even among us, we are very anxious not to miss the proper time, so how would this not be pleasing to God as well? In the beginning it was the proper time for silence, since the need for learning such things had not yet arisen. The time for speaking arrived when he was going to the Father. All right, then was the Savior separated from his disciples when he departed to the Father while still being with them by the activity and power and grace of the Spirit? How or in what way? After all, it is beyond question that he was not lying when he said, "Lo, I am with you always, to the end of the age,"[236] except as far as his flesh and bodily presence are concerned. But the Savior knew that the ascent of his flesh into heaven would be absolutely necessary for human nature, yet he was not unaware, as God, that the heart of the disciples was drunk with bitter sorrow. Christ's departure grieved them sorely, since they wanted to be with him always. But since he had already decided to do this, they did not ask him when or why he was leaving, or what induced or persuaded him to embark on the ascension. He sympathized with their suffering, since it came from love, and with their ill-timed preference for silence, **[617]** which prevented them from learning the reason for his departure, though knowing it would bring them much profit.

16:7 "Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is better for you that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Paraclete will not come to you."

Intense sorrow has consumed you, he says, and bitter affliction has distressed you, since you assumed that separation from me would not be without great suffering for you. And you were quite right to think this. You will surely experience the trials that I have already foretold, and you will endure the savagery of unholy persecutions. Since I consider that what is better should always be preferred to what is pleasing, I will tell you the truth: "it is

[236]Mt 28:20.

better for you that I go away." And we will submit all our thoughts to Christ the Savior, who is over us. Yet I think that this statement can trouble the simple to no small degree. They will surely reason and think to themselves that if the departure of Christ was better, then his presence must bring some kind of harm. And if it is better for us that he goes away, how will the opposite not occur if he does not go away? The question may perhaps trouble some of the innocent, but those who are led by divine understanding to a careful consideration of the statement would never be scandalized by it, I think, but would rather perceive the appropriate meaning of the words.

We must therefore consider and clearly understand the meaning of this statement above all others that, as it is written, "there is a time for every matter, and all good things in their season."[237] The Lord, then, was present in the world with his flesh at the appropriate times. And again, at the time that was appropriate and suitable for the fulfillment of every **[618]** event in his *oikonomia*, he ascended to the Father. His presence with the disciples cannot at all be criticized as unprofitable just because his departure was necessary in the end, and neither can the benefit of his departure be disparaged at all just because of the value of his presence. Each one of these events, occurring at the proper time, was accomplished profitably. So that we may quickly sail to the meaning of the passage and make it easier for the brothers to understand it, come, let us briefly explain, by way of a digression, the reason for the Only Begotten's *oikonomia* in the flesh and the benefit of his departure as well.

In order to free from decay and death those condemned by the ancient curse, he became human and clothed himself with our nature, as it were, though he was life by nature. Thus the might of death was overcome and the power of decay, which had invaded us, was destroyed. And since the divine nature is completely free of inclination to sin, he has borne us up with his own flesh. We were all in him, inasmuch as he appeared as a human being. In order that he may kill our "earthly members," that is, the passions of the flesh, and destroy the law of sin that rules in our members,[238] and that he may sanctify our nature as well, he shows himself to be our example and guide to the way to godliness and the pure revelation of enlightened truth and unerring conduct. Christ accomplished all these things when he became human. It was necessary, then, to lead human nature to the height of every blessing and not only free it from death and sin but also to raise it to the heavens themselves and make humanity a companion and member of the chorus of angels. **[619]** Just as he opened up a new way for us to escape decay by his resurrection, so also he opened for us the way above and placed in the sight of the Father the race that was cast out from his presence because of the transgression of Adam. Understanding this, the divinely inspired Paul said, "For Christ did not enter a sanctuary made by human hands, a mere copy of the true one, but he entered into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf."[239] Do you hear how although he was always in the sight and in the nature of his begetter because of the identity of their essence he now appears not for himself but for us? What I said before I will now say again. He places us in the sight of the Father when he departs to heaven, since he is the first fruits of humanity. Just as he who is life by nature is said to die and rise again for us, so also he who always sees his own Father and is seen by him is now said to have appeared before his Father as a human being, that is, when he became human not for himself but for us. And this one thing was

[237]Eccles 3:1, 11.

[238]Rom 7:23.

[239]Heb 9:24.

conspicuously missing in his *oikonomia* for us: our ascension to the very heavens, which happened first in Christ as the first fruits. He ascended to the heavens for us as a forerunner, as the divinely inspired Paul says somewhere.[240] In that he is human, he is now understood to be the high priest of our souls and the Paraclete and the propitiation for our sins. In that he is by nature God and Lord, he is seated with his begetter, but the glory that comes from this will extend no less to us. That is why Paul said of the Father, "He raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ."[241] When everything was finished on earth, then, he had to accomplish what was left, that is, the ascension to the Father. That is why he says, "It is better for you that I **[620]** go away, for if I do not go away, the Paraclete will not come to you."

Come, let us consider something else in our contemplation that is also beneficial and true. Everything on earth was finally accomplished, as we just stated. But it was surely also necessary for us to become sharers and participants in the divine nature of the Word, or rather for us to leave our own life and be transformed into another and reshaped into the newness of a God-pleasing way of life. However, it was not possible for us to attain this in any other way than through communion and participation with the Holy Spirit. The most fitting and appropriate time for the sending of the Spirit and his descent to us was that time in which the due season came: the time after the departure of Christ our Savior. When he was still in the flesh with those who believed in him, he became the supplier, I think, of all blessings. But when the moment and necessity called him to ascend to the Father in heaven, it was essential that he be present through the Spirit to those who worship him and that he dwell in our heart through faith so that, having him in ourselves, we may cry out with boldness, "Abba! Father!"[242] and may readily advance to every virtue and, what is more, may be found strong and invincible against the schemes of the devil as well as human attacks, since we have the almighty Spirit.

It would surely be easy to show, both from the old and the new Scriptures, that the Spirit transfers those in whom he comes and dwells into a new disposition and transforms them into newness of life. The divinely inspired Samuel, when he was conversing with Saul, said, "The Spirit of the Lord will come upon you, and you will be turned into a different man."[243] The blessed Paul says, "All of us, **[621]** with unveiled face, seeing the glory of the Lord as though reflected in a mirror, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord, the Spirit. Now the Lord is the Spirit."[244] Do you see how the Spirit transforms those in whom he dwells into another image, as it were? He readily moves them from the desire to set their mind on earthly things to an exclusive contemplation of heavenly things, and from cowardly fear to the most courageous disposition. There is no doubt that we will find that the disciples experienced this and were steeled by the Spirit so that they did not collapse before the assaults of their persecutors but held tight to their love for Christ. Therefore, the Savior's statement is true when he says, My departure to heaven is "better for you." That was the proper time for the descent of the Spirit.

16:8-11 "And when he comes, he will prove the world wrong about sin and righteousness and judgment: about sin, because they do not believe in me; about

[240]Heb 6:20.
[241]Eph 2:6.
[242]Gal 4:6.
[243]1 Sam 10:6 (1 Kings 10:6 LXX).
[244]2 Cor 3:18, 17.

righteousness, because I am going to the Father and you will see me no longer; about judgment, because the ruler of this world has been condemned."

After he has shown that his departure to the Father is the appropriate time for the descent and sending of the Spirit, thereby sufficiently assuaging the fierce grief of the disciples, he beneficially describes what works the Paraclete will perform. "When he comes," he says, "he will prove the world wrong about sin and righteousness and judgment." And he has carefully described in what way the rebuke of each of the items mentioned will take place. But since some are likely to stumble at the interpretation, **[622]** I suppose that I should explain it point by point and state more clearly the force of the meaning.

The reproof of sin is put first. How, then, will he "prove the world wrong about sin"? When it comes about for those who love Christ that they are finally worthy and believe in him, then—then—by this fact, he will condemn the world (that is, the unbelievers and those who refuse to be taught, who are still overcome by their love of worldly pleasure) of being guilty of their own sin and subject to death for their own transgression. God is no respecter of persons. He will not grant his Spirit for no good reason to some on the earth but not others, but he will cause the Paraclete to dwell only in the worthy, those who have truly honored him as God with a pure faith and who have confessed him to be the Lord and creator of all. That which the Savior himself said in anticipation to the Jews, "Unless you believe that I am he, you will die in your sins,"[245] the Paraclete will show to be in fact true when he comes.

Next he says that he will "prove the world wrong about righteousness, because I am going to the Father and you will see me no longer." He will rightly converse with those who believe in Christ after the ascension into heaven as being justly justified. They received him, whom they had not yet seen, as true God, and they believed that he was seated with his Father. One may easily learn that Christ called those who thus believe in him blessed by recalling what Thomas said and did. Still doubting the Son's resurrection, he says, "Unless I put my hand in his side and see the marks of the nails, I will not believe."[246] When he believed because Christ allowed him to do what he wanted, what statement did he hear? "Because you have seen me, **[623]** you have believed; blessed are they who have not seen and yet believe." Justly, then, those who believed without seeing have been justified, but the world has missed the attainment of equal blessedness since it did not seek the righteousness that is by faith but preferred to dwell in its own wickedness.

We must understand that the pair of reproofs we just mentioned will be carried out by the Paraclete not only against the Jews but against everyone who is stubborn and disobedient. The term *world* refers to those who are unceasingly involved in the pursuit of pleasure and who refuse to give up the devil's wickedness, but it also refers no less to those who are scattered and live throughout the world. Therefore, this double reproof has a general meaning and applies to all. Christ has caught not only Judea in his nets, as he did in the beginning, or only the seed of Israel, but the entire fallen race of Adam. Grace is not partial, but the blessing that comes from faith is for the whole world.

A third reproof will be carried out by the Spirit, as the Savior says: the most just condemnation of "the ruler of this world." How or in what way we will now explain. He will testify to the glory of Christ, and once he has truly shown him to be the Lord of all, "he will

[245]Jn 8:24.

[246]Jn 20:25.

prove the world wrong" in that it has wandered and left him who is truly God by nature and fallen down and worshiped him who is not God by nature, that is, Satan. The judgment against him is sufficient, I think, to demonstrate that this is the nature of the case. He could not have been condemned and he could not have lost his power or paid the penalty of his war against God, being delivered to chains of darkness, if he were by nature God, who is unshaken in his power and glory. But now we see him so incapable **[624]** of preserving his own honor that he is placed under the feet of the Spirit-bearers, or believers, who have confessed Christ to be God. They trample him as he tempts and struggles. When one sees the swarm of unclean demons shuddering and being cast out by their prayers and by the activity and power of the Holy Spirit, how could one not say with good reason that Satan has been condemned? He has been condemned by no longer being able to prevail over those who are sealed by the Holy Spirit for righteousness and sanctification through faith in Christ. How, tell me, did we trample on all his power, according to the statement in the Psalms addressed to everyone who lives in the world: "With the help of the Most High, you will tread on the asp and the basilisk; you will trample on the lion and the serpent"?[247] When the Paraclete from heaven enters holy souls, and he shows himself to be justly sent because of their sincere faith, then he will show that the world is answerable for its own sin and has no share in grace from above, since it rejects the redeemer. He will also "prove the world wrong" on the grounds that the world accuses believers of sin for no good reason. They have been rightly justified, even though they did not witness Christ's departure to the Father or his miracles, because they honored him by faith. I think that Paul too meant something like this when he said, "Who will bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn?"[248] "All lawlessness stops its mouth," as the psalmist says,[249] since it has no charge against those who are elect by faith and are clothed with the boast of righteousness that comes from this. "He will prove the world wrong" for going astray and setting its hope on one so condemned that he has fallen from all his former glory **[625]** and deserves our contempt and should be dismissed by those who worship God.

Now God has called Satan "the ruler of this world" not because he truly is this or because he has this dignity essentially (I mean the ability to rule), but he obtains this glory by deceit and violence and conquers and rules those who are still going astray by their own depraved choice, by which they bind their own mind to error and are inextricably entangled in the noose of captivity, even though it was in their power to escape by being converted by faith in Christ to the knowledge of him who is true God. Satan, then, has the title *ruler* illegitimately. He has no natural right to it over against God, but he maintains it by the wickedness of those who are going astray.

16:12-13 "I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own but will speak whatever he hears, and he will declare to you the things that are to come."

He found that they were overcome with sorrow because of their knowledge of things to come, and they found the anticipation of future events unbearable. "Sorrow has filled your heart," he says.[250] So he did not think it was necessary to burden them with any more.

[247]Ps 90:1 (LXX); Ps 91:13 (Ps 90:13 LXX).

[248]Rom 8:33-34.

[249]Ps 107:42 (Ps 106:42 LXX).

[250]Jn 16:6.

Instead, he buries, as it were, what he had to say next in a timely silence, since it probably would have hit them hard, and he saves the rest for them to know by the revelation and enlightenment of the Spirit at the proper time. Or perhaps he said this because he saw that they were still slow to comprehend the mystery since they were not yet **[626]** enlightened by the Spirit and they had not yet become partakers in the divine nature, since "as yet there was no Spirit," according to the holy Evangelist, "because Jesus was not yet glorified."[251] He intends to indicate that though he could reveal deep mysteries that surpass human understanding, he refuses to do so at present (and for good reason) because he sees that they are not yet ready for it. When my Spirit, he says, changes you from one thing into another and transforms your mind so that you are willing and able to despise the types of the law and to choose the beauty of worship in the Spirit instead and to prefer the truth to the shadows, then—then—he says, you will very easily be able to understand what I have to tell you. The full explanation will come to you when you are ready to receive it.

One might suppose that the Lord thought that he should say this to his disciples. What he once said as an illustration will come to the same thing and reach the same meaning as what we just said: "No one tears a piece from a new garment and sews it on an old garment,"[252] and, "No one puts new wine in old wineskins; otherwise, the skins burst, and the wine is spilled. But new wine must be put into new wineskins."[253] The new instruction of the gospel proclamation does not belong to those who are not yet refashioned by the Spirit into newness of life and knowledge, and they cannot contain the mysteries of the holy Trinity. The explanation of deeper matters is appropriately reserved for the future spiritual renewal by the Spirit. He will not allow the mind of those who believe in Christ to be devoted to the oldness of the letter of the law but will transform it to newness of thought and implant the understanding by which it will be able to see the beauty of the truth. **[627]** One may see very easily that before the resurrection of Christ our Savior, and before they became partakers of the Spirit, the disciples lived in a rather Jewish way and were clinging to the law's way of life, even though the mystery of Christ was clearly superior to it. For example, the blessed Peter was preeminent among the holy disciples. Yet when the Savior told him about his suffering on the cross and explained that it was necessary for the Jews to rage against him in their audacity, Peter replied, "God forbid it, Lord! This must never happen to you,"[254] even though the holy prophets explicitly announced not only that he would suffer but also what and how much he would endure. Furthermore, we must also consider the following. As it is written and we read in the Acts of the Apostles, Peter was once hungry and wanted to eat something, and he saw a sheet lowered from heaven by its four corners containing all the animals on the earth, in the sea and in the air. And there came a voice from above, "Rise, Peter, kill and eat," and he answered, "By no means, Lord; I have never eaten anything profane or unclean." Therefore, he was rightly rebuked and heard, "What God has made clean, you must not call profane."[255] I suppose it was necessary to remind him of what the Savior often said to the Jews, "It is not what goes into the mouth that defiles a person."[256] See, then, how he needed enlightenment by the Spirit. Do you see how he needed to be forged into another disposition, one that was better

[251]Jn 7:39. See Cyril's discussion of what it means to say that "there was no Spirit" in his comments on this passage in vol. 1, pp. 308-12.
[252]Lk 5:36.
[253]Mt 9:17; Lk 5:37.
[254]Mt 16:22.
[255]Acts 10:13-15.
[256]Mt 15:11.

and wiser than that of the Jews? Indeed, when they were enriched by heavenly grace from above, they "renewed their strength," as it is written,[257] and gained more knowledge than they had before. Then we hear them boldly saying, **[628]** "We have the mind of Christ."[258] By the "mind" of the Savior, they mean nothing other than the Holy Spirit, who enters them and reveals in due measure all that they need to know and learn.

"When the Spirit of truth," that is, the Paraclete, "comes, he will guide you into all truth." See how watchful this expression is. Note the sobriety of the statement. After he has told them that the Paraclete would come to them, he now calls him the "Spirit of truth," that is, of himself (since he is the truth). In order that the disciples may know that he is not promising them the visitation of some foreign and alien power, but he is promising to give himself to them in another way, he calls the Paraclete "the Spirit of truth," that is, of himself. The Holy Spirit is not understood to be foreign to the essence of the Only Begotten, but he proceeds naturally from that essence and is not something else besides him, as far as the identity of essence is concerned, even though he should be understood somehow to exist in his own person.[259] "The Spirit of truth," he says, will lead you into the knowledge of all truth. Since he thoroughly knows the truth of which he is the Spirit, he will not reveal it partially to those who worship him, but he will implant the entire mystery of it into them. Though now we know in part, as Paul says,[260] yet even in our limited knowledge, the beauty of the truth has shown forth in us whole and undefiled. No one knows "a person's thoughts," as it is written, "except the spirit of the person within."[261] In the same way, I think, or rather according to Paul's statement, no one knows "the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God within him."[262]

"When he comes," he says, "he will not speak on his own." This means **[629]** he will make you wise and reveal the mystery of the truth. He will say nothing at all that is discordant with my word, and he will expound no strange teaching to you, since he will introduce no laws of his own. Since he is my Spirit and my mind, as it were, he will surely speak my thoughts. Furthermore, the Savior says this not so that we may think that the Holy Spirit is an underling, as some ignorantly suppose, but rather he wants to assure the disciples that his Spirit will speak and act and will nothing other than he would, according to the principle of consubstantiality.

That is why he adds that "he will declare to you the things that are to come." He is practically saying, This will be a sign to you that the Spirit is definitely from my essence: as my mind, as it were, he announces what will come to pass, just as I do. I have foretold it, even though you are not able to understand everything. He would not foretell the future like I do unless he were surely in me and proceeded through me and were of the same substance as I am.

THE END OF THE TENTH BOOK **[631]**

[257]Is 40:31.
[258]1 Cor 2:16.
[259]On the *filioque* see above, p. 366 n. 223.
[260]1 Cor 13:9.
[261]1 Cor 2:11.
[262]1 Cor 2:11.

Chapters in Book Eleven

1. The Holy Spirit is by nature from God, and in the Son, and through him and in his substance.
2. His Spirit (that is, the Holy Spirit) is by nature in the Son and in his substance, just as he is also in the substance of the Father.
3. No one should understand the Son to lack any God-befitting glory, even though he is found to say, "Father, glorify your Son."
4. The fact that he is said to receive something from God the Father will in no way damage the glory of the Son, since there is a godly reason for this fact.
5. The Son will not be excluded from being true God, even though he calls the Father "the only true God."
6. The Son was not stripped of God-befitting glory, even though he is found saying to the Father, "Now glorify me with the glory that I had," etc.
7. The mention of something being given to the Son by the Father will not expel him from God-befitting honor, but he is clearly of the same substance and from him, even if he is said to receive something.
8. Even though something should be said to belong to the Father, it will not be excluded from the kingdom of Christ, for dominion over all things belongs to him as well.
9. The Son has the dignity of divinity by nature, even though he is said to have received this from the Father on account of his humanity and the form of his humiliation. **[632]**
10. Christ is not holy by participation with another, and neither is the sanctification through the Spirit foreign to his substance.
11. The Son is by nature one with God his Father, and he is in the Father, and the Father is in him according to the essential bond and mode of their unity. Likewise we ourselves, when we have received faith in him, are rendered one with each other and with God, bodily and spiritually.
12. The Son is by nature one with God his Father, even though he says that he received unity with the Father as a share of grace. **[633]**

OUR FATHER AMONG THE SAINTS
CYRIL
ARCHBISHOP OF ALEXANDRIA
ON THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

BOOK ELEVEN

Chapter One

The Holy Spirit is by nature from God, and in the Son, and through him and in his substance.

16:14 "He will glorify me, because he will receive what is mine and declare it to you."

Since the Holy Spirit is about to reveal the mystery of Christ to those who are worthy to receive it and to demonstrate in detail who he is by nature, how much power and authority he has, and that he rules all things with the Father, he appropriately says, "He will glorify me." He raises our mind above the thinking of the Jews, and he does not permit us to have such a limited and earthly conception of him that we imagine

that he is a mere human being or that he just barely surpasses the measure of the prophets or even **[634]** that he falls short of their glory. We will find that the leaders of the Jews, who did not know the mystery of godliness, thought such things about him. They uttered many blasphemies against Christ, and they opposed his statements with their own madness. Once they said, "You? Who are you? Abraham died, and so did the prophets; yet you say, 'Whoever keeps my word will never taste death.' Who do you make yourself out to be?"[1]

On another occasion, they cast in his teeth the lowliness of his birth according to the flesh and his utter insignificance in this respect: "Is this not the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How can he now say, 'I have come down from heaven'?"[2] Do you see here the miserable reasoning of the Jews? Because the multitudes were so disposed and thought that the Lord was not true God because of the perishable form of his body, and because they were not afraid to entertain the lowliest assumptions about him, the Spirit descended and made his glory crystal clear to the saints. We certainly do not say that he persuaded them with wise words alone, but he assured the mind of each of them by demonstrating with deeds that he is truly God, and he is the fruit of God the Father's essence. What, then, is the proof, and how did he make Christ glorious and conspicuous? By exercising miraculous and God-befitting activity in all things and by implanting full and perfect knowledge in the saints, he advocated for his glory. After all, knowledge of all things without being taught can only be ascribed to the nature that rules the universe, as can having all things naked and laid bare before his eyes[3] and the ability to do whatever he wants with great ease.

So the Paraclete, that is, his own almighty and omniscient Spirit, glorifies the Son. And how does he glorify him? **[635]** Whatever his Spirit knows and is able to do, he himself surely knows and is able to do as well. And if the Spirit, though he is almighty and accomplishes all things, receives from him, as he says, how could he himself not have power over all things? Now we must not suppose that the Paraclete, that is, the Spirit, lacks any inherent natural power, so that if he did not receive it from without he would not have sufficient power on his own to carry out the divine activities for which he was sent. Whoever even thinks that something like this is true of him would for good reason incur the charge of the worst blasphemy of all. The reason he says, "He will receive what is mine," is that the Spirit is of the same substance with the Son and proceeds through him in a God-befitting way, thus possessing all perfect activity and power over all things. We believe that the Spirit subsists of himself and that he truly is what he is and is said to be, even as he exists in the essence of God and proceeds and issues from it, possessing in himself all that belongs to it by nature. This takes place not by participation or relation or by him being something other than the divine nature, but rather he belongs to the divine nature. The fragrance of sweet-smelling flowers takes on, in a way, the essential and natural activity (or the quality) of the flowers that emit it, and it conveys knowledge to the outside as it falls on the bodily olfactory organs. It seems, at least in thought, to be something other than the nature that sends it, though when it is no longer considered on its own, it has no other nature than the one from which and in which it exists. In the same way, you should think of God and the Holy Spirit along the lines of this illustration. Then **[636]** the statement that the Spirit receives something from the Only Begotten is completely unimpeachable and free from blame. Since he proceeds through him by

[1]Jn 8:25, 52-53.
[2]Jn 6:42.
[3]Heb 4:13.

nature as his own Spirit with all his perfect qualities, the Spirit is said to take what is his. If this has been expressed in words that are rather earthly we should not be scandalized, but we should rather rightly blame the poverty of our own language since it cannot express as it should what is fitting for God. After all, what speech does not fall short of his ineffable nature and glory? The Paraclete, then, he says, "will receive what is mine and declare it to you," that is, he will say nothing other than what I intend, and since he is my Spirit he will surely say the same thing as I do, and he will declare my will to you. **[637]**

Chapter Two

His Spirit (that is, the Holy Spirit) is by nature in the Son and in his substance, just as he is also in the substance of the Father.

16:15 "All that the Father has is mine. For this reason I said that he will receive what is mine and declare it to you."

The Son quite clearly shows himself to us in these words as the pure and precise imprint of the Father's hypostasis. By what he says he enables us to understand that since he is the fruit of the Father's essence, he applies to himself by nature all that belongs to that essence and says that it is his—and for good reason. Since nothing severs or separates the Son from the Father, as far as their complete likeness and equality is concerned (save only that he is not the Father), and since the essence shines forth in both with no difference, how could their qualities not be in common, or rather identical in both, so that what belongs to the Father is in the Son and what belongs to the offspring is in the one who begat him? That is why, I think, he made this statement about these matters to us with precise care. He did not say, "All that the Father has, I too have," so that we may not think he is a bare image understood as a mere copy, conformed to an archetype by external adornments, as is the case with us since we were made in the image of God. Rather, **[638]** he says, "is mine," to indicate the highest unity, which he has with his begetter, and the meaning of consubstantiality, which consists of unchangeable attributes in both. This you may see quite clearly when he says to the Father in another passage, "All that is mine is yours, and all that is yours is mine."[4] How could they not be identical in nature, since there is absolutely no difference between them, but there is complete essential equality and likeness? God the Father, then, has his own Spirit, that is, the Holy Spirit, from himself and in himself, through whom he dwells in the saints and reveals mysteries to them. But the Spirit does not receive orders to do this like an underling. Do not think anything like that. Rather the Spirit is in him essentially and proceeds from him without division or separation, as the one who explains as his own what belongs to the one in whom and from whom he exists. God does not deal with creation in any other way than through the Son in the Spirit. But this Spirit also belongs to the Only Begotten, since he is of the same substance with the Father.

Therefore, he is saying, since God the Father clearly uses his own Spirit to reveal mysteries to those who are worthy, and he accomplishes whatever he wants through the Spirit, this applies to me by nature as well. That is why I said, "He will receive what is mine and declare it to you." Let no one be troubled when they hear the word *receive* in this statement. Rather let them consider the following, and they will do rightly. All things spoken of God are on our level, yet they are not understood that way but are understood to be above us. Thus we say that the Spirit receives what belongs to the Father and the Son not as though he ever lacked the knowl-

[4]Jn 17:10.

edge and power that is in them and only then possessed them (and just barely) when he is understood to receive. After all, the Spirit is always wise and powerful, or rather he is wisdom and power itself, not by participation in anyone but **[639]** by nature. We would say that the aroma of fragrant herbs entering our nostrils is different than the herbs themselves, at least in thought, but it is understood to proceed from the herbs in no other way than by receiving the power of what it originates from in order to demonstrate it, and it does not have a different nature because it is from them and in them. Something like this, or rather transcending this, is how you should think of the relation between God and the Holy Spirit. The Spirit is like a living and distinct fragrance of his essence that conveys what comes from God to creation, which implants through itself the participation in the highest essence of all. If the aroma of fragrant herbs imparts its own power to garments and in a way transforms what it enters into itself, how could the Holy Spirit not be strong enough, since he is from God by nature, to make those whom he enters share the divine nature through himself? And since the Son is the fruit and imprint of the hypostasis of his begetter, all that belongs to him applies to the Son by nature. That is why he says, "All that the Father has is mine. For this reason I said that he will receive what is mine and declare it to you." He is referring to the Spirit, who is through him and in him, through whom he himself dwells in the saints. The Spirit is not another besides him, even though the Spirit is understood to exist on his own personally. The Spirit, after all, is the Spirit, not the Son.

16:16 "A little while, and you will no longer see me, and again a little while, and you will see me, because I go to the Father."

After he said that he would reveal to them through his own Spirit everything that was necessary and useful for them to know, he explains **[640]** his passion, right after which was his ascension into heaven, which made the coming of the Spirit most necessary since he no longer dwelt with the holy apostles in the flesh after he ascended to the Father. He makes his statement very guardedly to take away the sting of their grief about this. He knew—he knew that the disciples would again be wrapped up in immeasurable fear and devoured by bitter sorrow as they looked forward to terrible and unbearable calamities when they would be left alone as the Savior ascended to the Father. That is why I think he does not say openly that he is going to die and that the rage of the Jews will bring him to this point. Instead he very aptly mixes great subtlety into his statement and indicates to them the joy of the resurrection that will accompany his passion by saying, "A little while, and you will no longer see me, and again a little while, and you will see me." The time of his death was already within the doors, which would make the Lord invisible to the disciples for just a little while, until he had despoiled Hades and thrown open the gates of darkness for those who were there and raised his own temple to life again. Once that had happened, he appeared once again to his disciples and promised to be with them "all the days of the age," as it is written.[5] Even though he departs in the flesh and removes himself to the Father above us and sits at the right hand of the one who begat him, still he dwells with the worthy through the Spirit and he is with the saints always. After all, he promised that he would not leave them orphaned.[6] Since there is a short time before the beginning of his passion, he says, "A little while, and you will not see me," since he was about to be hidden, so to speak, for a brief time by death. **[641]** "And again a little while, and you will see me," he says, since he came to life

[5]Mt 28:20.
[6]Jn 14:18.

again on the third day after preaching "to the spirits in prison."[7] This was the strongest possible proof of his love for humanity. I am referring to the fact that he saved not only those who were still living on earth, but he proclaimed release, as it is written,[8] also for those who were already dwelling in the heart of the abyss and sitting in shadows.

Notice how concerning his passion and resurrection he said, "A little while, and you will not see me, and again a little while, and you will see me," but when he adds, "because I am going to the Father," he leaves the rest unsaid. He did not mention how long he would remain there or when he would come back. And why is that? It is not for us "to know the times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority," as the Savior himself says.[9]

16:17-18 Then some of his disciples said to one another, "What does he mean by saying to us, 'A little while, and you will no longer see me, and again a little while, and you will see me'; and 'Because I am going to the Father'?" They said, "What does he mean by this 'a little while'? We do not know what he is talking about."

Not yet understanding what he said, the disciples talk with one another, and they wonder what he meant by "a little while" and "a little while" and "you will not see me." Christ, however, anticipates their desire to ask a question and once more shows them quite aptly that as God, he knows their heart and the thought that is still turning in their mind and what is buried in the depths of their heart as though they had already uttered it with their tongues. After all, what could ever be hidden from him before whom all things are laid bare?[10] That is why he says to one of the saints, "Who is this that hides counsel from me, putting together words in his **[642]** heart and thinking to hide them from me?"[11] So he helps them at every opportunity, and he uses the present occasion to nourish them in a secure and firm faith.

16:19-20 Jesus knew that they wanted to ask him, so he said to them, "Are you discussing among yourselves what I meant when I said, 'A little while, and you will not see me, and again a little while, and you will see me'? Truly, truly, I tell you, you will weep and mourn, but the world will rejoice; you will have pain, but your pain will turn into joy."

Since they were thirsting for information and searching carefully for the meaning of his words, he gives them a very clear explanation of his passion and grants them extremely beneficial foreknowledge of what they were about to undergo. He did not decide that he should mention these things in order to trouble them prematurely but in order to fortify them by knowledge that they may be found to be courageous when the trouble comes. That which is expected to happen comes more gently than that which is not expected at all. When you who are genuinely united to me by your love for me see your guide and teacher enduring the rage of the Jews, the insults and outrages and audacious acts prompted by their bizarre madness, then "you will weep and mourn, but the world will rejoice," that is, those who do not know how to set their mind on what is pleasing to God but are nailed, as it were, to worldly pleasures. He is referring once again to the wild and motley multitude of the Jews and to the unholy band of God's enemies who had obtained positions of leadership, the scribes and the Pharisees, who jeered at the Savior and uttered many insults against their own head. At one point

[7] 1 Pet 3:19.
[8] Is 42:7.
[9] Acts 1:7.
[10] Heb 4:13.
[11] Job 38:2.

they say, "If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross now, and **[643]** we will believe in you."[12] At another, "You who would destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself!"[13] This is the scum that comes from the abominable tongue of the Jews. But while those who fix their mind on the world will do and say such things, he says, "you will have pain." But you will not have to endure suffering for long, because your pain will turn into joy. I will come to life again and will completely remove the cause of your sorrow. I will wipe away your tears and bring you eternal and everlasting happiness. The joy of the saints has no end. Christ lives forever, and he has destroyed death for everyone. Consequently, we may also understand that the worldly will experience eternal grief in return. If Christ died according to the flesh and those genuinely belonging to him were grieved while the world rejoiced at their suffering, then when death and decay are brought to nothing and Christ our Savior rises from the dead, the sorrow of the saints will turn to joy and the joy of the worldly will turn to sorrow.

16:21-22 "When a woman is in labor, she has pain, because her hour has come. But when her child is born, she no longer remembers the anguish because of the joy of having brought a human being into the world. So you will have pain now; but I will see you again, and your heart will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you."

Once again he extends comfort to them, and he goes through various illustrations to help them fend off their bitter sorrow. See how he introduces a clear example to persuade them that they must suffer and not give up in the face of trouble or grief, since those things will surely and **[644]** inevitably end in joy. The baby is the fruit of bitter labor, and the joy of children comes to mothers through pain. But if they had renounced the pain of labor from the start, they would not have wanted to conceive at all or to pursue marriage, which is the cause of it. They would never have become mothers at all, but by their hesitation they would have missed out on this thrice longed-for and highly desirable condition. In the same way, then, the pain that will happen to you will not go unrewarded. You will rejoice when you see a new child born into the world, incorruptible and indestructible. Clearly he is referring to himself. He tells them that their joy in him will not be taken away or lost. According to Paul's statement, or rather according to the meaning of the truth, he who has once died "will never die again."[14] Their joy in him, then, has a firm foundation, and for good reason. If we have grieved at his death, who will take from us our joy, since we know that he lives and abides forever as the prince who bestows all spiritual blessings to us? No one will take the joy away from the saints, as the Savior said, but it is taken away immediately from those who nailed him to the cross. Now that his suffering, at which they thought they should rejoice, is at an end, grief will inevitably come to them.

16:23-24 "On that day you will ask nothing of me. Truly, truly, I tell you, if you ask anything of the Father, he will give it to you in my name. Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, so that your joy may be complete."

He says that the holy disciples will increase in knowledge when they are "clothed with power from on high," as it **[645]** is written.[15] And when their mind is illumined by the torch light of the Spirit, they will at last be able to

[12]Mt 27:40, 42.
[13]Mt 27:40.
[14]Rom 6:9.
[15]Lk 24:49.

understand everything, even though they did not ask him any questions while he was present. The Savior says this not because they will no longer need enlightenment from him but because when they receive his own Spirit and have the Spirit dwelling in their heart, their mind will lack no good thing but will be filled with perfect knowledge. By perfect knowledge, we mean that which is right and unswerving, which cannot bear to think or say anything discordant, but which has the right view concerning the holy and consubstantial Trinity. Though now we "see through a mirror and in an enigma" and we "know in part," as Paul says,[16] nevertheless, since we do not depart from the precision of the dogmas but follow the intent of the holy and divinely inspired Scripture, we have a knowledge that is not imperfect, which one could not get in any other way than by the illumination of the Holy Spirit. That is why he urges the disciples to ask for spiritual gifts and at the same time gives them encouragement that they will not fail to obtain what they ask for.

By the addition of "truly," he strengthens their faith that if they should want to approach and ask for something, they will receive it from the Father since he himself will mediate their request and go to the Father with them. That is what "in my name" means. We approach God the Father in no other way than through the Son. Through him "we have access by the one Spirit to the Father," as it is written.[17] Therefore, he also says, "I am the gate; I am the way. No one comes to the Father but by me."[18] In that the Son is also God, he supplies good gifts to the saints along with the Father, and he is found to be a cogiver of blessings to us. For example, the divinely inspired Paul gave us the clearest proof of this when he wrote, "Grace to you and peace from God **[646]** our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ."[19] In his capacity as mediator, high priest and Paraclete, he brings supplications to the Father on our behalf. He himself is our boldness to address the Father. We should pray, then, "in the name" of Christ our Savior, for then the Father will most readily grant our prayers and give blessings to those who ask him, so that we may receive them with joy. When we are filled with spiritual gifts and we obtain the rich supply of knowledge from him through the Holy Spirit who dwells in us, we will easily triumph over every strange and disgusting pleasure. Thus, as we do good works and attain to the practice of every virtue with exceptional zeal and are strengthened in everything that perfects our sanctification, we rejoice exceedingly at the hope of reward. And banishing the sadness that springs from an evil conscience, we enrich our mind with the joy that is in Christ. This was not done among the ancients. They did not practice this kind of prayer because they did not know about it. But now it is defined by Christ, and for good reason, since the "time of setting things right"[20] has dawned and every perfect blessing has been brought by him. Just as the law perfected nothing since the righteousness of the law was imperfect, the same is true for the manner of prayer.

16:25 "I have said these things to you in parables. The hour is coming when I will no longer speak to you in parables but will tell you plainly of the Father."

By "parable" he means language that is unintelligible and not at all clear, which is concealed by such subtle obscurity that he says that the hearers are not readily able to understand it. **[647]** After all, that is the form that parables take. What I have told you, he says, I have

[16]1 Cor 13:12, 9.
[17]Eph 2:18.
[18]Jn 10:7; 14:6.
[19]Rom 1:7.
[20]Heb 9:10.

spoken to you in parables and enigmas, reserving the unambiguous revelation for the proper time, which has not yet arrived. The hour, that is, the time, will come—it will come when I will give you a clear explanation of the Father's glory, and I will implant in you knowledge that surpasses human understanding. What that time is, he does not clearly say, but we may suppose that he is referring either to that time after his resurrection in which we are enriched with knowledge by the Spirit as Christ bestows him on us, or perhaps it is the time to come after the end of the world when we will gaze upon God's clear and unveiled glory as he imparts to us knowledge of himself with utter clarity. That is why Paul says that "prophecies will come to an end" and "knowledge will cease,"[21] meaning nothing other than the sense we have assigned to this passage. "For we see in a mirror, and we know in part," as we just said.[22] "But when the perfect comes, the partial will come to an end."[23] If you want to learn how or in what way this happens, I will now explain it.

When the night is dark, the bright beauty of the stars can be seen as each one sends out its light, but when the sun rises with its radiance, the partial light now disappears and the brilliance of the stars grows weak and ineffective. In the same way, I think, the knowledge that we now have will end at that time, and what is partial will cease, as the perfect light enters and fills us completely with the knowledge of God. Then, when we can approach God with confidence, **[648]** Christ will tell us about his Father. Now, because of the weakness of our mind, we are just barely led to an obscure knowledge by shadows and illustrations and various images and types drawn from our affairs. Then, however, we will have no need at all of any type or enigma or parable, but with a bare face, as it were, and an unshackled mind we will understand the beauty of the divine nature of God the Father as we gaze upon the glory of the one who springs from him. "For we will see him as he is," as John says.[24] Now we know him according to his humanity, not in his full God-befitting glory. But when the time of his *oikonomia* in the flesh is past, and the mystery that is for us and on our behalf has been fulfilled, we will at last see him in his own glory and that of God the Father. Since he is God by nature and therefore of the same substance with his Father, he will surely have equal honors and shine in his own God-befitting glory.

16:26-27 "On that day you will ask in my name. I do not say to you that I will ask the Father on your behalf; for the Father himself loves you, because you have loved me and have believed that I came from the Father."

He allows them to ask for nothing at all by prayer and supplication except in his "name." But he promises that the Father will very readily grant them what they pray for, not because he is persuaded by the intercessions of the Son in his capacity as Paraclete and mediator, but by his own choice he will be generous to them, eager to shower the highest and ultimate favor on those who love Christ as if he were paying a debt. No one with any sense **[649]** would think or ignorantly claim that the disciples, or the other saints for that matter, will not need the mediation of the Son for themselves. All things are through him, from the Father and in the Spirit, since he is the "Paraclete," as John says, "not only for our sins but for the whole world."[25] He says these things for our benefit to show us that in this matter as well God the Father highly desires our honor and love for his offspring. The

[21] 1 Cor 13:8.
[22] 1 Cor 13:12, 9.
[23] 1 Cor 13:10.
[24] 1 Jn 3:2.
[25] 1 Jn 2:1-2.

wretched people of the Jews did not understand this, and they did not shudder to shoot him down with unbearable abuse. They also "tried to kill him," as it is written,[26] because of the transformation of the mind of the believers from the coarse commandments of the law to the refinement of the life of the gospel. Those miserable people said in their ignorance, or rather in their desire to sharpen their unholy tongue against him, If this man were from God, he would not have broken the sabbath.[27] He says, then, that the favor of God the Father will most readily be granted to those who believe without doubting and are firmly convinced that "he came from God the Father." He says that the Father will leap up in advance, as it were, and anticipate the request of the mediator and overwhelm with spiritual blessings the mind of those who hold the right conception of me and who do not think they should set their mind on love of the letter.

Now we will understand "I came from the Father" to mean either "I have been begotten and have shown forth from his essence" (in a procession in which he exists and is understood to subsist on his own, though not separate from the Father in any way, since the Father is in the Son and the Son, in turn, is by nature in the Father), or "I came out" means "I have become like you (namely, human) and I have put on your form and nature." **[650]** The proper nature of anything that exists may be conceived of as a place, as it were, from which it proceeds when it is transformed into something else and becomes what it was not before. Now we are certainly not saying that just because the Only Begotten appeared and truly became human like us he stopped being God. He is "the same yesterday and today and forever."[28] Rather, when he assumed what he was not, while preserving his own attributes, he is understood to go out, so to speak, in the way we have explained it.

But you may understand "I have come from the Father" in another way, if you wish. The Pharisees, who are only good at ignorance, as I said before, thought that the Lord came as one of the false prophets on his own volition without being sent by God, just as they habitually pointed out to those who came to him that Christ's teaching conflicted with the law. That is why they considered him to be disobedient. They said that keeping the law is very precious to God the Father, but he broke it by his teachings. They rejected Christ as an enemy of God and as one who had chosen to oppose what was declared by him through Moses. For that reason they considered him to be foreign to God. But not so the blessed disciples! They loved him, with their thoughts exalted above the erroneous thinking of the Jews, and they truly believed that he came from God, as we just said. That is why they are loved by the Father and receive equal favor from him as compensation, as it were. And if those who believe that the Son came from God are dear and pleasing to God the Father, then those who hold the opposite opinion are truly cursed and abominable in God's sight. And if God is quite ready to hear the prayers of those who love the Son, then he will not accept the prayers of those who do not. This, then, was what was spoken to them through the voice of Isaiah: **[651]** "When you stretch out your hands to me, I will hide my eyes from you; even though you multiply your prayers, I will not listen to you; your hands are full of blood."[29]

16:28 "I came from the Father and have come into the world; again, I am leaving the world and am going to the Father."

This is clear and unambiguous proof that the Lord is not one of the false prophets and that

[26]Jn 5:18.
[27]See Jn 9:16.
[28]Heb 13:8.
[29]Is 1:15.

he did not come to us to speak his own private opinion or teach what is contrary to the will of the Father, as the Jews ignorantly and disgustingly suppose. He goes back to the Father and returns with authority to where he knows he came from. All right, someone might say to combat the ignorance of the Jews, perhaps Christ was not genuine, as you claim, O Jews, and he introduced the teaching of the gospel way of life without the consent of God the Father when he showed that the commandments of the law were now useless and unprofitable for perfection in godliness. After all, you charge him with breaking the sabbath, and whenever he performed miracles before you, you irreverently said, as was your custom, that he did them "by Beelzebul, the prince of demons."[30] How was it, then, that he ascended to heaven itself? How was it that the Father received him as a coruler and the angels threw open the heavenly gates for him who, according to you, combatted his decrees and propounded teachings contrary to the will of the king of the universe? He was not taken up secretly, was he? Was there not a great crowd to whom the divine and heavenly angel said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up toward heaven? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into **[652]** heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven"?[31] What do you say to this, O Jew? Will you refuse to honor with obedience even the voice of an angel? Will you not accept the testimony of even many eyewitnesses? This despite the fact that the law clearly says, "Every matter will be established by the mouth of two or three witnesses."[32] How could the charge of false prophecy fittingly be brought against him who returns with authority to the Father in heaven? Would it not rather follow that because of the clear proof of this fact we should believe without doubt that he is from God (that is, the Father) and that he is none other than the one whom the law itself and the prophets proclaimed?

When he says that he has come into this world and that he departs again from the world to the Father, he does not mean that he abandoned the Father when he became human or that he abandoned those on earth when he departed in the flesh to the Father. He is true God, filling all things by his ineffable power and abandoning nothing that exists.

16:29-30 His disciples said, "Yes, now you are speaking plainly, not in any parable! Now we know that you know all things and do not need to have anyone question you; by this we believe that you came from God."

They marvel at the utter clarity of his proof, and they are amazed at the openness of his statement. He made his statement to them clearly and without any concealment. They rejoice at receiving a proof that is free of all difficulty, and they say that his statement has nothing hard to understand, but his words on this matter are so easy to grasp **[653]** that they do not seem to contain even a trace of a parable. And they gain this additional benefit as well: Since you know what is whispered in secret, they are saying, and you anticipated the question that we would have asked, seeking to learn what you just said, we believe that "you came from God." After all, they are saying, knowledge of what is secret and hidden would belong to none other than the God of all. Since you know all things, how could there be any doubt that you have shone forth from God, who knows all things? This truly God-befitting and miraculous sign served to nurture the disciples, along with others, in undoubting faith, so that we see in them the truth of the statement "Give an opportunity to the wise, and they will become wiser; instruct the just and they

[30]Lk 9:15.
[31]Acts 1:11.
[32]Deut 19:15.

will receive more instruction."[33] And they say, "Now we know," surely not meaning that they first began to believe when they heard these words or saw the sign (I mean of the Lord's omniscience). Rather that was when they began to take the faith they had already received and root it in their souls, being firmly convinced that he is God from him who is God by nature and in truth. Therefore, we will take "Now we believe" not as the beginning of faith but as the firm confirmation of the understanding that is now honored with approval.

16:31-32 Jesus answered them, "Do you now believe? Behold, the hour is coming, indeed it has come, when you will be scattered, each one to his home, and you will leave me alone. Yet I am not alone because the Father is with me."

Next the Savior very elegantly shows them that the time for their confirmation in all good things has not yet arrived. That time would bring them the descent of the Holy Spirit from heaven and power from on high, as it is written.[34] Then they showed clearly that their human cowardice was turned to strength, **[654]** and they distinguished themselves with blameless courage, not fearing the opposition of the Jews or the rash anger of the Pharisees or any other terrible threat. Showing themselves bold champions of the divine proclamation, they said openly, "We must obey God rather than human beings, for we cannot keep from speaking about what we have seen and heard."[35] In the same statement, then, he shows that they were not yet firm in perfect faith because they had not yet tasted the fellowship of the Spirit, citing as proof the fear that they would soon display, and he foretells what was about to happen. In so doing, he obviously gives them no small profit. They will be more strongly and firmly established in the understanding that he is God by nature when they realize that there is nothing in the future that he does not know. Behold, the time will not be long, he says, or rather it has already come within the gates, when you will "leave me alone" and you will go "to your own homes." That is a circumspect way of saying, When you are overcome by unmanly cowardice, you will give thought only to your own lives, and preferring your own safety to the love you owe your teacher you will depart to whatever places you can find. How then do you "now believe" when you have not yet cleared yourself of the accusations against your courage since you do not yet share in the boldness given through the Spirit? There is no doubt that the blessed disciples turned and fled and could not bear the attack of the Jews when the traitor was present, leading an unholy band of soldiers and the servants of the leaders. Then they left Christ alone. We mean "alone" in the sense that none of those who were accustomed to follow and learn from him were present. But he was not alone in that he is God from God and in God naturally and indivisibly. Christ uttered this statement in a human fashion for our sakes to **[655]** teach us that when the time comes for us to bear temptation or persecution or any other such thing and calls us to undergo danger that leads to glory (I mean danger for the sake of godliness), we should not give up hope that we will be able to escape, even if some of the like-minded brothers fail to run the race with us and assist us as they are able, in effect sharing the imminent danger with us by their sympathy. Even if they turn and flee, finding the attack of cowardice in themselves to be grievous and unbearable, we should be confident that God will not be weakened because of it. He alone can save the one who is committed to him. We are not alone even if we see no one beside us, as I just said, since we have the almighty God at our side to help and

[33]Prov 9:9.
[34]Lk 24:49.
[35]Acts 5:29; 4:20.

shield us, protecting us with his all-sufficient aid as the psalmist says, "Lord, you have encompassed us with favor as with a shield."[36] Now we make these comments on this passage not to admire love of life as a noble quality when we can bring our life in the body to a glorious end, fighting and struggling against dangers for the sake of God, but rather that we may believe that even if there is no one with the courage and will to do this with us, we should not be faint at heart. We will not be alone, for God is with us.

16:33 "I have said this to you, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you have trouble. But take courage; I have conquered the world!"

In these words, Christ skillfully and beneficially sums up his entire (so to speak) discussion with them. He has gathered the meaning of what he said in a few words, and he has presented to them in a very concise form the knowledge of his will. **[656]** I have now presented these words to you, he says, to exhort you to have "peace in me" and so that you may clearly understand that hardship will come upon you "in the world" and you will experience many troubles on account of me. But you will not be overtaken by these fearful things, for "I have conquered the world."

So that I may make his statement completely clear to you, come, let us first say what having "peace" in Christ means. The world, or those who love worldly affairs, do sometimes practice peace toward each other but certainly not in Christ. For example, the dissolute lovers of bodily pleasure are dear and acceptable to those who are like them. And those who covet riches that do not belong to them and are therefore greedy and thieving will be utterly pleasing to those who practice the same vice. "For every creature loves its like," as it is written, "and people stick close to those like themselves."[37] In all these cases, however, the august name of peace is corrupted. The saying is true, but it is not true for the saints in the same way as it is for the wicked. After all, the bond of peace is not sin, but faith, hope, love and the power of reverence for God. And this is in Christ. Peace in Christ is clearly the chief of all blessings for us, bringing with it its sister, as it were: love for one another. Paul says that love is the fulfillment of the whole divine law.[38] There is no doubt that for those who love one another the love for God himself above all things will surely come. John says that those who love their brother will surely love God himself.[39]

He indicates something else as well. I am referring to his statement, "In this world you have trouble. But take courage; I have conquered the world!" **[657]** Anyone who wants to understand this in a simple sense would say this: Christ has shown himself superior and more powerful than every sin and worldly hindrance. And since he has conquered he will give victory to those who undergo trials for his sake. But those who want to take his statement in a more precise sense would surely think of it like this: We have overcome decay and death because Christ rose as a human being for us and in our place, making his own resurrection the beginning of conquest over death. The power of that event will surely extend to us as well since the one who conquered was one of us in that he appeared as a human being. And just as we overcome sin, which first died in Christ (since Christ conveyed that good to us as his own relatives), so also we ought to "take courage" because we too will overcome the world. Christ has "conquered" as a human being on our behalf, becoming the beginning and gate and way for human nature in this

[36]Ps 5:12 (Ps 5:13 LXX).

[37]Sir 13:15-16.
[38]Rom 13:10.
[39]See 1 Jn 4:20.

matter as well. We who long ago fell and were conquered have now overcome and conquered because of him who is one of us and has conquered for us. If he conquered as God, that would be of no use to us, but if he conquered as a human being, we too have conquered in him. The second Adam has appeared to us from heaven, as it is written.[40] Just as we bore "the image of the man of dust"[41] when we fell under the yoke of sin like him, we will surely also bear the form of the heavenly man, that is, Christ, when we conquer the tyranny of sin and triumph over all worldly tribulation. For Christ "has conquered." **[658]**

Chapter Three

No one should understand the Son to lack any God-befitting glory, even though he is found to say, "Father, glorify your Son."

17:1 After Jesus had spoken these words, he looked up to heaven and said, "Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son so that your Son may glorify you."

After giving his disciples what was sufficient for their salvation and inciting them by fitting words and arguments to a more accurate understanding of his teachings, and after establishing that they are well able to fight in their trials and rooting courage in their mind, he immediately and profitably changes the form of his words and molds them into the form of a prayer. He allows not a moment of time to intervene between his address to them and his address to God the Father. Here too he suggests by his conduct the pattern of an excellent way of life. I think that those whose goal is reverence should not be unaware that it is completely fitting either to devote themselves to discussing what is profitable and necessary for the brothers or, when they happen not to be doing this, to employ the service of speech in supplications to God, so that no superfluous word may slip in between. In this way, the good conduct of the tongue may proceed with fitting speech. **[659]** To whom is it not completely obvious that in vain conversation statements slip out that are not free from blame? As a wise man said, "When words are many, you will not escape sin, but if you restrain your lips, you will be prudent."[42]

You may find something else to admire as well, which brings no small profit to us. The beginning of his prayer is for his own glory and that of the Father. After that, he includes and immediately introduces a prayer for us. What is the reason for this? He is persuading the pious person who loves God and moving the doer of good works to prayer. Just as we should do good works and all things, not directing our energy to our own glory but to the glory of the Father of all (I mean God, for he says, "Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven")[43]—so also when the occasion calls us to pray we should seek God's glory before our own, as Christ himself says: "Pray then in this way: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread."[44] He fashions for us, then, a pattern for prayer. It was necessary—necessary—that Christ himself, not a presbyter or an angel,[45] should manifest himself as our leader and guide in all good things and in the way that leads up to God. We have been called, and we really are, as the prophet says, "taught by God."[46]

And it would be fitting for us to examine with greatest care what he says to his Father. I

[40]1 Cor 15:47.
[41]1 Cor 15:49.
[42]Prov 10:19.
[43]Mt 5:16.
[44]Mt 6:9-11.
[45]Is 63:9.
[46]Is 54:13.

think we should pay sharp attention to the investigation of his words **[660]** and diligently track down the precise meaning of his teachings. "Father," he says, "the hour has come; glorify your Son so that the Son may glorify you." As far as the form of words is concerned, one might think that the speaker is perhaps lacking in glory. But when one considers the dignity of the Only Begotten, I think one would easily avoid such a weak conclusion. To think that the Son lacks any glory or is without a share of the honor due him (despite the fact that he is the "Lord of glory" since the divinely inspired Scriptures call him this)[47] is insane. In another place we may observe him saying to the Father, "Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had in your presence before the world existed."[48] Therefore, who can doubt and who is so mentally stricken and opposed to all truth that they do not understand and confess that the Only Begotten lacks no God-befitting glory, as far as his own nature is concerned? Though he was in the form of God the Father and totally equal with him, he did not consider equality with God something to be exploited, but he descended into our humble state and emptied himself.[49] He bore this body, completely lacking in glory, and out of love he put on the likeness of human insignificance, so that when the appropriate time had come—the time when, after he fulfilled the mystery, he put on once again his original and essential glory—he saved the whole world and secured life and the knowledge of God for those who were in it. Showing the Father to agree with him in this matter, he addresses him, saying that it was surely fitting for him to return back up to the dignity of his own nature.

And how does he ascend? He shows himself to carry out the works of the divine nature with his flesh, not as a servant **[661]** of someone else's activity but as the wisdom and power of God the Father. We should think that this is precisely the way he carried out the works of the divine nature with authority. After all, everything is from the Father but not apart from the Son. How could God the Father accomplish any of his proper functions without his wisdom and his power (I mean, the Son) being with him and carrying out with him those things in which the movement of activity is understood to be? That is why the wise Evangelist, who wrote this book, says at the beginning of his work, "All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being."[50] Therefore, since the principle of consubstantiality persuades us to conclude that all things are from the Father, through the Son and in the Spirit, and since after he killed death and decay and took away the tyranny of the devil he was about to enlighten the whole world under the sun with the illumination of the Spirit and thereby show himself to be true God by nature, it is appropriate for him to say, "Father, glorify your Son so that the Son may glorify you." No one with any sense would say that the Son is asking for glory from the Father (as, for example, one person asks from another) and that the Son is promising to give him glory in repayment, as it were. It would hardly be fitting, or rather it would be completely ignorant, to have such a conception of God. The Savior spoke these words, holding up his own glory as absolutely necessary to the Father, so that he may be known to be of the same substance. Just as it would imply a charge of dishonor for God the Father not to have the kind of Son, springing from him and begotten of him, who is what God from God by nature ought to be, so also I think it will redound to his glory and honor to have a Son who is in the condition in which he himself is understood and said to be. The

[47]1 Cor 2:8; Jas 2:1.
[48]Jn 17:5.
[49]Cf. Phil 2:6-7.
[50]Jn 1:3.

Father, then, is glorified in the [662] glory of his offspring, as I just said. The Father gives glory to the Son when one realizes from the Son's deeds what kind of Father he has, and the Father receives glory in return, as it were, when one realizes what kind of Son the Father truly has. The essential and natural boast of glory, then, will go from the Father to the Son and from the Son to the Father.

If any should propose that because of the humility of the incarnation the Lord is speaking here in a manner inferior to his own position (since this was his custom), their explanation certainly would not be inappropriate, but they would not attain an accurate understanding. If he were merely asking for glory from the Father, it would not be unreasonable to ascribe that request to the limits of the human nature. But since he promises to glorify the Father in return, does it not clearly follow of necessity that we should eagerly embrace the view that we have just given? [663]

Chapter Four

The fact that he is said to receive something from God the Father will in no way damage the glory of the Son, since there is a godly reason for this fact.

17:2 "Just as you have given him authority over all flesh, to give eternal life to everything that you have given him."

Christ explains to us in these words the kind of glory with which God the Father will exalt and glorify his own Son, and with which he will be glorified in return by his own offspring. He expands on his statement and makes the meaning clear for our edification and profit. After all, God the Father knows all things. What need does he have of being taught the details of the request? He is invoking the Father's good will upon us. Since he is the high priest of our souls in that he became human even though he is by nature God with the Father, he makes a very appropriate request on our behalf, thus persuading us to believe that he is now the atoning sacrifice for our sins and the righteous Paraclete, as John says.[51] That is why Paul too, wanting us to be convinced of this, writes, "For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who in every respect has been tested as we are, yet without sin."[52] [664] Therefore, since he is a high priest in that he appeared as a human being, he offered himself to God the Father as a spotless sacrifice and a ransom for the life of all, as the first fruits of human nature that he may "have first place in everything," as Paul says.[53] He also offers the reprobate earthly race, purifying it by his own blood and transforming it to newness of life through the Holy Spirit. Since, as we have often said, all things are brought about from the Father through the Son in the Spirit, he fashions a request for blessings for us, as a mediator and high priest, even though he is a cobenefactor and cosupplier with his begetter of divine and spiritual gifts. Christ distributes the Spirit to whomever he wishes according to his own will and authority.

That is how these matters stand. Our discussion must now investigate what the form of the prayer means to communicate. "Father," he says, "glorify your Son so that your Son may glorify you."[54] How then or in what manner will what I said happen? I desire, he says, that just as "you have given me authority over all flesh," so also "everything that you have given me may have eternal life." The Father glorified his Son by subjecting everything under the sun to his rule, and the Father himself was glorified in return by him. The Son was glorified by the Father when everyone was convinced that he was the offspring and fruit of the Almighty, who easily subjected all things to

[51] 1 Jn 2:1-2.
[52] Heb 4:15.
[53] Col 1:18.
[54] Jn 17:1.

the yoke of his reign. And the Father was glorified in return, as it were, by his own offspring. Since his offspring was known to accomplish every mighty deed with ease, the splendor of his reputation extends to his Father as well. Therefore, he says, just as you glorified and were glorified by giving him authority and lordship over all (in the way that was just described), **[665]** so also I desire that nothing of what was given to me may be lost. This glory runs from the Father to the Son and back from the Son to the Father. It was necessary—necessary—that everything under the authority and control of the almighty Word of God, once it was saved, remain in perfect blessedness so that it may no longer be tyrannized by death and overcome by decay and sin and be subject to the original evils.

But since the statement "You have given him authority over all flesh" is likely to trouble some of the simple, let us make a few profitable remarks on this, not shrinking back in the face of this need even though all language is too feeble to explain these matters. The Lord's statement is especially appropriate for the form that he assumed, I mean the form of his humiliation and the limitations of human nature. Listen to the argument: if we blush when we hear that he is called a slave for us, even though he is the Lord of all with the Father, and that he was installed as "king on Zion, his holy hill,"[55] even though he can rule the universe in his own nature without receiving the rule from someone else, then we will have to blush if he says that he receives anything as a human being. But if we marvel at his willing submission in these matters, since we are not unaware of the essential dignity that is his by birth, why would we not marvel at it also in this statement? Though he possesses everything as God, he says that he receives it as a human being, for whom rule is not essential but given. The question "What do you have that you did not receive?"[56] applies to the state of originate beings. Christ is originate in that he became human, even though he is unoriginate by nature in that he came from God. All good things are understood to be and truly are in God properly and by nature, but they are in us by adoption and are supplied by divine grace. Therefore, when he says that as a human being he has been appointed to rule over us and has been given "authority over all flesh" by the Father, **[666]** let no one be offended in any way. We must keep the *oikonomia* in mind. But if you think it is right to take the words in a more God-befitting way, then keep in mind what the Lord said to the Jews, "Truly, truly I say to you, no one can come to me unless drawn by the Father who sent me."[57] Those to whom the Father wants to give life he brings to his own offspring (who is his own life-giving power), and he empowers them and makes them wise through his Son. In fact, if he wants to bring any into subjection to his rule, he calls them in no other way than by the living and omnipotent might by which he rules the universe, I mean his own offspring. Human beings, who have no power of themselves to accomplish deeds that are above them, borrow from God that which can bring others into subjection. Through him kings reign, as it is written, and rulers rule the earth through him.[58] The God of the universe, who did not receive this power from anyone else, subjects the human race to himself together with all things—the human race that had fallen away from love toward him and had shaken off the yoke of his rule. He grants, as it were, authority over them to his own power, through which he subdues whatever he wishes. God the Father subjects them to his Son as to his own power. Through him, completely and in no other way, everything that exists becomes his

[55]Ps 2:6.

[56]1 Cor 4:7.

[57]Jn 6:44.

[58]Prov 8:15-16; Rom 13:1-6.

willing subject. Just as he makes all things wise and gives them life through his Son, so also he rules all things through him.

We must further note that the grace of his heavenly love for humanity is not restricted to Israel alone, but it extends to "all flesh." After all, whatever falls under the authority of the Savior surely also will participate in his life and grace as well. [**667**]

Chapter Five

The Son will not be excluded from being true God, even though he calls the Father "the only true God."

17:3 "And this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent."

He defines faith as the mother of eternal life and says that the power of the true knowledge of God will cause us to remain forever in incorruption and blessedness and holiness. And we say that knowledge of God is true if it is free from the charge of turning aside to something else and of running after what it should not. Some have worshiped "the creature rather than the creator"[59] and have honored a piece of wood, saying, "'You are my father,' and to a stone, 'You have begotten me.'"[60] Those wretched people sank to such a level of ignorance that they gave the divine name in all its fullness to senseless blocks of wood and invested them with the ineffable glory of the essence that is above all things. He calls the Father "the only true God," then, to contrast him with the spurious gods and to distinguish, as it were, the true God from those who are erroneously called gods. This is the intent of his statement. After saying to our great profit that the Father is one and "only," he also mentions his own glory, saying, "and Jesus Christ whom you have sent." [**668**] That is because the only way one can attain perfect knowledge of the Father is if the knowledge of his offspring, that is, the Son, comes along with it and is intimately connected with it. Whoever knows what the Father is surely also knows the Son at the same time. Therefore, when he says that the Father is the one true God, he does not exclude himself. Since he is in him and from him by nature, he too will be the true God and the only God in the only God. Besides him there will be no other "only true God." "For the gods of the Gentiles are demons."[61] The creature is a slave. I do not know how some people worship it, falling into faulty and sensuous knowledge. There are many who are deceptively thought to be gods in this world and who obtain that name illegitimately, but they stand in contrast to the only true God and to the Son who is in him and from him by nature, both distinct and connatural with him by their natural unity. He is distinct because he is understood to exist on his own. He is the Son, after all, not the Father. He is connatural because he who is from his Father by nature will surely be joined with the existence of his parent. The Father and the Son are together, since he is and is understood to be Father because he is known to have begotten [the Son].

Then he says, "This is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent." In response, those who are eager to listen and zealous in their serious pursuit of divine dogmas will ask, Do we say that knowledge is eternal life and that knowing him who is really true God by nature will suffice to secure our hope with nothing else needed? How then is faith without works dead?[62] When we say "faith," we mean nothing other than knowledge about the true God, since knowledge comes through faith. The prophet

[59]Rom 1:25.
[60]Jer 2:27.
[61]Ps 96:5 (Ps 95:5 LXX).
[62]Jas 2:26.

Isaiah testifies to this when he says to certain people, "Unless you **[669]** believe, you will not understand."[63] But I think we can see from the following that the Holy Scriptures show us that the knowledge consisting merely of concepts is utterly worthless. One of the holy disciples said somewhere, "You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe—and shudder."[64] What then shall we say to this? How can Christ be telling the truth when he says that knowing the one true God and Father, along with his Son, is eternal life? I think we must respond that the Savior's statement is certainly true. Knowledge is life because it is pregnant with the full power of the mystery and it brings participation in the mystical blessing[65] by which we are joined to the living and life-giving Word. That is why I think Paul says that the Gentiles have become fellow members of the body and fellow participants in Christ[66] in that they have partaken of his holy body and blood. Thus our members should be understood to be the members of Christ.[67] Knowledge, then, is life that also brings the blessing of the Spirit. He dwells in our heart, reshaping those who receive him into adopted children and remolding them into incorruption and piety through the gospel way of life. Our Lord Jesus Christ, therefore, knowing that knowledge of the one true God is the supplier and matchmaker, as it were, of the aforementioned blessings, says that it is "eternal life" in that it is the mother and nurse of eternal life because it is pregnant, as it were, in its own power and nature with those things that cause life and lead to it.

I also think we should pay eager attention to the way in which Christ says that the perfect knowledge of the only true God is fulfilled in us. Notice how it does not come about without contemplation of the Son, and it is clear that **[670]** it does not come about without the Holy Spirit. That is how each person is understood and believed to be in the Trinity, according to the Scriptures. The Jews were led by the commandments of Moses to reject the many false gods and were persuaded to devote themselves to the worship of the one true God. "Worship the Lord your God," the law says, "and serve only him."[68] But since those who have worshiped and are now devoted to the one true God do not have perfect knowledge of the one they worship, they are now called to that knowledge by the Savior's words, that they may learn that the one true creator of all is not unitary but that he is a Father and he has begotten a Son, or rather that they may now behold him accurately in his exact image, that is, the Son. Through the imprint, one may quite easily proceed to complete contemplation of the archetype. Our Lord Jesus Christ, then, most appropriately said that those who have been called by faith to adoption and eternal life must learn not only that God is one and true but also that he is a Father. And they must learn whose Father he is, namely, the one who became flesh for us and was sent to set right the corrupt rational nature, that is, the human nature. **[671]**

Chapter Six

The Son was not stripped of God-befitting glory, even though he is found saying to the Father, "Now glorify me with the glory that I had," etc.

17:4-5 "I glorified you on earth by finishing the work that you gave me to do. So now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had in your presence before the world existed."

Once again he combines the human with the divine, and his statement sort of mixes them

[63]Is 7:9 (LXX).
[64]Jas 2:19.
[65]I.e., the Eucharist.
[66]Eph 3:6.
[67]1 Cor 6:15.
[68]Mt 4:10; Deut 6:13.

together, looking at both, neither raising the person of the speaker to the full authority and glory of God, nor allowing it to stay completely within the confines of human nature. No, he mixes both into one, which is foreign to nothing in the statement. Our Lord Jesus Christ thought he should teach the believers not only that he is the only begotten God but also that he became human for us[69] so that he might obtain everyone for God the Father and transform them to newness of life, purchasing humanity with his own blood and putting himself in danger for the life of all. He, though one, is more precious than all. He says, then, that he glorified the Father "on earth by finishing the work" that he gave him.

Come, then, let us consider a double path, as it were, of interpreting these statements **[672]** and discuss how this statement was made both in a human and a God-befitting way. If he said this as a man, you should understand it as follows: Christ is our type and source and image of the divine way of life, and he shows us clearly how and in what way we should live. That is why the authors of the divine Scriptures give a very subtle explanation of the matter. He is teaching us, then, through what he says here that when each of us fulfills our commanded service and carries out God's commands to their completion, we surely glorify him by our works, not as though we were giving him something he did not have (since the divine and ineffable nature is full of glory), but we cause those who see the works and benefit from them to praise him. "Let your light shine before others," he says, "so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven."[70] When we are courageous and willing to do good works for God, we are not seeking a good reputation from this for ourselves, but we are winning a good reputation for the honor and glory of him who rules over all. When we live a loathsome life that is out of harmony with God so that we nullify his ineffable glory, we are rightly called to account and make our own soul subject to punishment, as we hear through the voice of the prophet, "Because of you my name is continually blasphemed among the Gentiles."[71] In the same way, I think, when we practice the most illustrious virtue, we are then surely preparing ourselves to be praised. When we have carried out the work given to us by God, we will then with complete justice ascend to the bold speech fitting for genuine children and ask for equal glory in return, as it were, from God, who was glorified by us. "As I live, **[673]** declares the Lord, I will glorify those who glorify me, and whoever despises me will be despised."[72] In order to show us that we may fittingly ask the only God for glory (I mean the eternal glory to come) when we have shown him blameless obedience in all things and are found to be scrupulous keepers of his commands, Christ says that he has glorified the Father "by finishing the work on earth" that he had given him. He then asks to be given glory in return—not a glory that is foreign or external to him, as ours is, but rather his own honor and glory. We needed to ask for it, but he did not. Notice how he restores boldness to our nature in himself and through himself in two ways. In him first and through him, we have been enriched both with the ability to carry out what God has entrusted to us for our restoration and the duty to make a bold request for the honor that is due to those who are esteemed. Long ago, because of the sin that ruled over us and the apostasy that happened in Adam, we did not have the ability to do anything that makes for virtue, and we were as far removed as possible from boldness before God. In fact, God, out of his great kindness, raised us up to that bold-

[69]See Jn 1:18, 14.
[70]Mt 5:16.
[71]Is 52:5.
[72]1 Sam 2:30 (1 Kings 2:30 LXX).

ness by speaking through the voice of the prophet, "Do not be afraid because you have been ashamed, and do not be confounded because you have been put to shame."[73] Therefore, just as our Lord Jesus Christ is the first fruits and gate and way for all the other blessings, so he is here as well.

Now if the Savior is asking for his own glory that he had before the world existed, and we take the meaning of his statement and apply it as a pattern for us and maintain that we too should do with great zeal what is pleasing to God, thus asking with boldness for the glory from above, let no one think **[674]** that we are saying that people should in imitation of Christ ask for some ancient glory from before the world existed as if it were due them. Rather let us realize that it is most appropriate to ascribe to each what is proper to each. If Christ is understood to have only a human nature, like we do, then let him only make statements that are fitting to those who are earthborn, and let him not transgress the limits of human nature. But if the Word, being God, became flesh, then when he says anything God-befitting it will apply to him alone and not to those who are not like him.

So if we think of the statement in a more human way, we will understand the meaning of the passage in the sense we gave above. But if we recall the God-befitting honor of Christ, then we will have good reason for thinking that the meaning exceeds human nature. In that case we say that he glorified his Father by carrying out the work that he received from him, but not as a servant or as one who had the status of underling. This point is necessary so that the Lord of all does not seem to be on our level or on the level of the creature, which serves as a slave. Servile subjection and slavelike submission to the divine will are characteristics of humans and angels. But he perfectly accomplished our redemption, which was entrusted to him, because he is the power and wisdom of his begetter, just as the divine psalmist certainly says to us as he explains the meaning of the mystery in the Spirit: "Command, O God, your power; empower, O God, that which you have wrought in us."[74] In order to offer clear proof that the Son is the power of the Father, though not separate from him (I mean as far as their identity of essence and nature is concerned), he first says, "Command your power," introducing two persons (I mean the one who receives the command **[675]** and the one who gives the command). Then he immediately unites them in natural unity by ascribing the outcome of the action to the divine and ineffable nature by saying in all wisdom, "Empower that which you have wrought in us." The Son, then, is entrusted with or receives from his Father "the work" concerning us.

Now we must investigate and explain how or in what way God commands his own power, as far as it is possible to explain matters that exceed our understanding in a human way. Let us take, for example, a man like us and imagine that he is skilled in the art of making bronze. Let us further imagine that he undertakes to make a statue or to restore one that is damaged or mutilated. How then will he work, and how will he restore it as he decided to do? Clearly he will entrust the task that he has decided to accomplish to the power of his hands and the wisdom of his skill. But even though his wisdom and power seem to be conceptually distinct from him, as it were, they are not really distinct from him since they are included in the definition of his essence. So also you should think that something like this is the case with God, though you should not take the illustration to be precise in every aspect. Since God transcends everything, he should be understood to transcend this illustration as well. The same point may be made by taking

[73]Is 54:4.

[74]Ps 68:28 (Ps 67:29 LXX).

the sun and fire as an illustration. The sun commands, as it were, the light that pours out of it to illuminate everything, and it gives to its rays the power of heating whatever receives them as their "work," so to speak. Similarly, fire commands and orders, as it were, the property of its own nature to carry out what is proper to it. But we do not for this reason say that the rays and the light are in the position of servile underlings to the sun, **[676]** or the activity of burning is in service to the fire. Each one carries out its own activities that it has by nature. Even if they somehow seem not to be works of the sources themselves, still they are not distinct from their sources by nature. You should understand something like this to be the case with God the Father and the Word, who was begotten from him by nature, whenever he is said to be entrusted with work to do regarding us.

Furthermore, the Father's wisdom and power, that is, Christ, glorified God the Father on earth "by finishing the work" that he gave him to do. And as he brings his work to a fitting conclusion, he asks for the glory that he always had and requests the resumption of his original glory, now that the occasion calls for it. What work, then, did he finish by which he says he glorified the Father? Being true God, he became human by the good pleasure and will of the Father, desiring to save the whole world and to renew the fallen earthly race to eternal life and the true knowledge of God. And this was indeed accomplished by the God-befitting power and authority of Christ, who destroyed death, overturned the usurped dominion of the devil, took away sin and demonstrated pure love toward us by taking away the accusation that stood against everyone and by enlightening those who erred so that they now know the one true God. When Christ restored these things by his own power, the Father was glorified by all, that is, by everyone in the world who understood his wisdom and power and his gentleness and love toward humanity. He has shown forth and revealed himself in his Son, the image and imprint of his own nature, and the tree has been made known by its fruit, as it is written.[75] After his works are accomplished and his plan for our salvation is carried to its fitting conclusion, he ascends to his own glory and assumes his ancient honor. **[677]** But since he is still clothed in human form, he fashions his question as one asking for what he does not have, since for humanity everything comes from God. Although he was not bereft of God-befitting glory (especially since he was begotten as God from God the Father), nevertheless, since he diminished that glory somewhat at the time of his *oikonomia* for us by taking on this body that has no glory, there is good reason for him to ask as one who truly has no glory. When he says this he is speaking as a human being. Paul himself is thinking something like this when he writes to us concerning him, "Let the same mind be in you," he says, "that was in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross. Therefore, God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."[76] Though the Son is exalted, in that he proceeded as God and Lord from the Father, nonetheless the Father is recorded exalting him as a human being, for whom the humility of his nature surely brings about the need for exaltation. Therefore, he is asking for resumption of his glory with the

[75]Mt 12:33.
[76]Phil 2:5-11.

flesh as well. He is surely not bereft of his glory, even if he were to ask without receiving, since the Word, being true God, was never excluded from his own honors. Rather, he is raising his own temple[77] to the glory that he always had, or rather he is raising himself with his flesh—the flesh that was the reason for the period of dishonor. So that he may not seem to some to be asking for a strange and unusual glory that he did not have in ancient times, **[678]** he shows that it is "before the world" and "in the presence of" the Father himself. The Son was never excluded from the glory of the Father. He always reigns with him and is hymned and worshiped with him by us and the holy angels as God from God and in God and with God. This is what I think the divinely inspired Evangelist John is teaching when he says, "In the beginning was the Word. And the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning."[78] **[679]**

Chapter Seven

The mention of something being given to the Son by the Father will not expel him from God-befitting honor, but he is clearly of the same substance and from him, even if he is said to receive something.

17:6-8 "I have made your name known to the people whom you gave me from the world. They were yours, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. Now they know that everything you have given me is from you; for the words that you gave to me I have given to them, and they have received them and know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me."

I have already stated in my examination of the previous passage (which was not without care, if I may say so) that Christ addressed the heavenly Father in both a divine and a human way. He directs his statement with both in mind, neither placing it entirely within the limits of human nature nor allowing it to be completely shaped by his God-befitting glory. And here no less we may see that the same procedure has been observed. As God from God and as the imprint of the ineffable nature he says to his Father, "I have made your name known to the people," saying "name" instead of "glory." This is the usual practice of speech among us as well. **[680]** For example, the most wise Solomon wrote, "A good name is to be chosen rather than great riches,"[79] that is, a good reputation and glory is better than the splendor and eminence of wealth. And God himself through the voice of Isaiah says somewhere to those who have made themselves eunuchs "for the sake of the kingdom of heaven,"[80] "Let not the eunuch say, 'I am a dry tree.' Thus says the Lord to the eunuchs: 'To those who keep my commands and do what I desire, I will give them in my house and within my walls a place and a name better than sons and daughters. I will give them an eternal name.'"[81] And no one would imagine, I think, at least if they are wise, that the honor with which God will repay them will be distributed in mere names to those who, from a good and virtuous disposition, have wrestled against all worldly pleasures and have put to death their "earthly members"[82] and have esteemed only those things that are in harmony with the divine laws. No, here again he uses the word *name* to stand in for *glory*. After all, those who reign with Christ will be enviable and worthy of admiration.

Therefore, the Savior is quite right to maintain that he has manifested the "name" of God the Father, that is, he has established his

[77]I.e., his body. See Jn 2:21.
[78]Jn 1:1-2.
[79]Prov 22:1.
[80]Mt 19:12.
[81]Is 56:3-5.
[82]Col 3:5.

glory with utter clarity to people throughout the whole world. How or in what way? He offered himself as the demonstration through his exceedingly great works. The Father is glorified in the Son as in the image and type of his own form. The beauty of archetypes is always seen in their imprint. The Only Begotten, then, has shown himself to be wisdom and life in his essence, the craftsman and creator of all things, superior to death and decay, holy, blameless, compassionate, sacred and pure. So his begetter is recognized to be these things as well. After all, he could not have a different nature than the one from whom he comes by nature. The Father, then, **[681]** shines in the glory of his offspring as in an image and type of his own form. Such was the description of him among the ancients, but now he has been revealed to our very sight. And what is seen is always more convincing than words.

I think that our discussion on these matters has not been off the mark, but we must now go down another path, that is, the way of contemplation.[83] The Son has "made known" the Father's "name," that is, he has established us in the understanding and in the clear perception not merely that the Father is God—that was proclaimed by the divine Scriptures even before his advent—but that in addition to being true God he is not a Father in name only, but he has his own offspring in himself and from himself, concurrent with and coeternal with his own nature. After all, he did not beget the creator of the ages in time. And God's name *Father* is more proper than the name *God*. The one signifies honor, but the other signifies his essential attribute. When someone uses the word *God*, they are referring to the Lord of all. But when someone uses the word *Father*, they are touching on the definition of what belongs to his person, since they have made it known that he has begotten. The Son himself used the name *Father* as a somewhat more appropriate and truer name for God when he said not, "I and God," but "I and the Father are one,"[84] and again when he said of himself, "On him God the Father has set his seal."[85] Yes, and when he commanded his disciples to baptize all nations, he explicitly ordered them to do this not "in the name of God" but "in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."[86] And when the divinely inspired Moses described the creation of this world, he did not ascribe the creation to one person, but he wrote, "And God said, 'Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness.'"[87] **[682]** By saying "let us make" and "according to our likeness" he is referring to the holy Trinity. The Father created all things and called them into being through the Son in the Spirit. But this was not very clear to the ancients. Indeed, the passage was obscure to them because it did not name the Father individually or expressly introduce the person of the Son. Our Lord Jesus Christ, however, without concealment and with great boldness called God his own Father, and he called himself the Son and showed himself really to be the true fruit of the nature that rules all things. In so doing he made known the name of the Father and raised us to perfect knowledge. The knowledge of God and of the ruler of all is most perfect not when one knows merely that he is God but when one knows both that he is the Father and whose Father he is, accompanied, of course, by the Holy Spirit. To know merely that God is God suits us no better than those under the law because it does not exceed the level of Jewish thought. Just as the law made nothing perfect but introduced a pedagogical lesson that was not sufficient for

[83]Cyril considers the following discussion to be "contemplation" (θεωρήματα), a more spiritual kind of interpretation, because it concerns the relation of the Father and the Son rather than the glory of God in general.

[84]Jn 10:30.
[85]Jn 6:27.
[86]Mt 27:19.
[87]Gen 1:26.

the restoration of godly virtue, so also it inculcated a knowledge of God that was imperfect, merely restraining people from loving false gods and persuading them to worship the one true God. "You shall have no other gods before me," it says.[88] "You shall worship the Lord your God and serve only him."[89] Our Lord Jesus Christ, however, introduced better things to those who were under the commands given by Moses, and he offered a more glorious teaching than the commandments of the law. He graced them with a better and more glorious teaching than the ancient knowledge. He made it clear to us not only that the maker and lord of all is God but also that he is a Father. And the proof is in his actions. He offered himself as the image **[683]** when he said, "Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. I and the Father are one."[90]

Knowing this (since he is God from God by nature), he addresses his Father openly in a God-befitting way. But he immediately joins the more human statement, "whom you gave me from the world. They were yours, and you gave them to me." Now we should understand that the Lord did not say this separately on his own as if something had been allotted or transferred to him by the command of God the Father that did not belong to the Son. After all, he was king before the ages, as the psalmist says,[91] and an eternal sharer in the rule of the Father. Indeed, the most wise Evangelist John taught us that all things belong to him and are subject to him (that is, with the Father reigning along with him). He wrote, "He came to what was his own, and his own did not grasp him."[92] When he mentions his own who did not understand him, he is referring to those who were shaking off, so to speak, the yoke of his rule. He said these things at this point to make it clear to his hearers that there were some in this world who did not so much as receive the one true God into their mind but worshiped creation, the demons and the devil's schemes. But even though they did not know the creator of the universe since they wandered outside the truth, they still belonged to God since as the creator he is the Lord of all. All things belong to God, and there is no creature at all that does not have one Lord, even though the creature may not know it. Surely no one would say that the fact that some have wandered off will remove the creator of the universe from his rule over all things. Rather the fact that they are created and brought into being by him will subject all things to him and put them under his yoke. Since this is the truth, **[684]** even those who are captive to the devil's deceptions and entangled by the world's vanities still belong to him who is God by nature.

How, then, or in what way were they given to the Son? God the Father was pleased to have Emmanuel reign over them not as though he only then began his reign over them (since he was always Lord and king in that he was by nature God) but in the sense that when he became human and risked his life for all, he purchased all people for himself and through himself brought them to God the Father. Therefore, he who in ancient times and from the beginning reigned as God, together with his begetter, was appointed king as a human being, to whom ruling must be given as a gift (along with other gifts) in accordance with the limitations of human nature. A human being is a rational animal, capable of intellect and knowledge, possessing these qualities as natural attributes. But it is not so with being a king. The former qualities are included in the definition of human essence, but the latter clearly lies outside the essence and is added and is not among the qualities that belong inseparably to the nature. Whether it is present or absent, there is no harm done to the subject, as far as the definition of its essence is

[88]Ex 20:3.
[89]Mt 4:10; Deut 6:13.
[90]Jn 14:9; 10:30.
[91]Ps 74:12 (Ps 73:12 LXX); Ps 55:19 (Ps 54:20 LXX).
[92]Jn 1:11.

concerned. The honor of kingship is therefore bestowed on a person by God as a gift from the outside. "For by me," he says, "kings reign, and by me rulers rule the earth."[93] So he who rules all things with the Father, in that he was and is and will be by nature God, receives power over those in the world, according to the form and limitations that are proper to a human being.

That is why he says, "Everything you have given me is from you." Properly and strictly speaking, all things belong to God, but to us who were created by him they are a gift. To possess and rule over all things is most appropriate for the divine nature, but for us it is most fitting to receive. The genuine state of a servant and the desire to obey bore witness **[685]** to those who believed in him without doubt. He says, "The words that you gave to me I have given to them, and they have received them and know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me." He explicitly refers to his own statement as words from God the Father because of their identity of essence and because he is God the Word, who expresses the Father's will, just as the word that comes from our mouths and by its utterance strikes the ears of the person next to us explains the mystery in the depth of our heart. Thus the prophetic word said of him, "His name will be called the angel of the great counsel."[94] The Word, who is in him and from him, interprets the excellent, surpassing, great will of the Father through the words that he uttered as a human being when he became like us and, after his ascension into heaven, through the knowledge and enlightenment of the Spirit. He reveals his mysteries to those who are worthy, and Paul will testify to this when he says, "Since you desire proof that Christ is speaking in me."[95]

He testified, then, concerning those who love him, that they received and kept the words given to him by the Father. They were also satisfied that he came from him and was sent by him, while those who were sick with the contrary opinion thought otherwise. Those who did not accept his words or keep their mind open to faith were neither convinced nor believed that he came from God the Father and was sent by him. Indeed, the Jews said at one point, "If this man were from God, he would not break the sabbath,"[96] and again, "We are disciples of Moses. We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from."[97] **[686]** Do you see how they denied his sending so that they shamelessly announced that they did not know where he was from? They did not accept his ineffable birth before the ages, I mean his birth from the Father, diseased as they were by the utter perversity of their thoughts and stumbling merely because of the incarnation as if it were some kind of stone. You may easily be assured of this when you hear the Evangelist saying, "For this reason the Jews were seeking to kill him, because he was not only breaking the sabbath but was also calling God his own Father, thereby making himself equal to God."[98] And what the unholy Jews said to him is also recorded, "It is not for a good work that we are going to stone you but for blasphemy, because you, though only a human being, are making yourself God."[99] You will understand quite clearly, then, that those who genuinely keep his word confess and believe that he has shone forth from the Father (for that is what I think "came from" means) and he has been sent to us "to proclaim the decrees of the Lord," as the psalmist says.[100] On the other hand, those who ridicule the Word, who is so divine and who is from the

[93]Prov 8:15, 16.
[94]Is 9:6.
[95]2 Cor 13:3.
[96]Jn 9:16.
[97]Jn 9:28-29.
[98]Jn 5:18.
[99]Jn 10:33.
[100]Ps 2:7.

Father, have rejected the faith and clearly denied that he is God and that he is from the Father and that he came to us for our salvation and became like us except for sin. He is right, therefore, to commend to God the Father those who are good and genuine, who submit their souls to hearing his word, never forgetting them, so that what he said at the beginning of his time among us may be clear. And what is that? "Everyone therefore who acknowledges me before others, I also will acknowledge before my Father in heaven; but whoever denies me before others, I also will deny before my Father in **[687]** heaven."[101] This is what God the Father himself promised to do, crying out long ago through the voice of Isaiah, "Be my witnesses, and I too am a witness, says the Lord God, and my servant whom I have chosen."[102] The Savior, therefore, is speaking in a divine and human way at the same time, since he was God and a human being in the same person. Without blame, he speaks according to each, carefully applying what belongs to each to the needs of the moment. **[688]**

Chapter Eight

Even though something should be said to belong to the Father, it will not be excluded from the kingdom of Christ, for dominion over all things belongs to them together.

17:9-11 "I am asking on their behalf; I am not asking on behalf of the world, but on behalf of those whom you gave me, because they are yours. All mine are yours, and yours are mine; and I have been glorified in them. And now I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you."

He once more mediates as a human being, the reconciler and mediator between God and human beings. And as our truly great and all-holy high priest, he appeases the wrath of his Father by his prayers, sacrificing himself for us. He himself is the sacrifice and the priest; he himself is the mediator; he himself is the spotless victim, the true lamb "who takes away the sin of the world."[103] The ancient mediation of Moses was a type, as it were, and a well-defined shadow of Christ's mediation, which was revealed in the end times, and the high priest of the law sketched out in his own form the priest who is above the law. The contents of the law are shadows of the truth. The divinely inspired Moses and the eminent Aaron along with him continually intervened between God and the assembly, at one time averting God's wrath over the transgressions of the Israelites and asking for mercy from above for the weak, at another time praying for **[689]** and blessing them and introducing the sacrifices of the law, and also the offerings in their appointed order, sometimes for sins, sometimes thank-offerings for the benefits they experienced and knew they had received from God. But Christ appeared in the last days as a high priest and mediator, superior to the types and outlines in the law, and he "asks" on our behalf as a human being, and as God he seeks the honor of his Father as well, who distributes blessings to the worthy. Paul demonstrated this to us with utmost clarity when he said, "Grace to you and peace from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ."[104] He who asks as a human being, also grants as God. He is a holy high priest, blameless and spotless, so he offered himself not for his own weakness, as was the case with those appointed to serve as priests according to the law, but rather for the salvation of our souls, and this happened once for our sins. He became a Paraclete for us, "and

[101]Mt 10:32-33.
[102]Is 43:10.
[103]Jn 1:29.
[104]2 Cor 1:2.

he is the atoning sacrifice for our sins," as John says, "and not for ours only but also for the whole world."[105]

But perhaps someone will object to our words, crying out, Does not the disciple's statement contradict the words of the Savior? Our Lord Jesus Christ in this statement explicitly declines to pray[106] for the whole world, but the wise John utters quite the opposite. He asserts that the Savior will be the Paraclete and atoning sacrifice not only for our sins but also for the whole world. It is not difficult to explain the solution to this problem, or to say how the disciple may be seen to be in harmony with the words of the Lord. The blessed John, since he was a Jew from the Jews, **[690]** did not want anyone to think that the Lord is a Paraclete before the Father only for the Israelites and not for the other nations scattered throughout the world, even though they were about to distinguish themselves by faith in him and would shortly be called to the knowledge of salvation through Christ. Therefore, he very appropriately says that the Lord will be an atoning sacrifice not only for those of the race of Israel but for the whole world, that is, those from all nations and races, who will be called through faith to righteousness and sanctification. Our Lord Jesus Christ makes a distinction between his genuine disciples and those who think otherwise, and between those who have chosen to insult him with such stubborn unbelief and those who readily listen to his divine words, who have already submitted the neck of their heart and have practically put the yoke of slavery to God on themselves. Only "for them," he said, is it most fitting to pray. He considers that it is right to bestow the benefits of his mediation only on those for whom he is the mediator and high priest. They were given to him, he says, even though they belong to the Father, since there is no other way to kinship with God than through the Son. He will teach you this as well when he says, "No one comes to the Father except through me."[107] Notice how the Father, when he gave to his offspring those of whom he speaks, gained them for himself. And the apostle, who was extremely knowledgeable in the Holy Scriptures, understood this well and said, "In Christ, God was reconciling the world to himself."[108] After all it was because Christ served as mediator and received those who came to him by faith and brought them through himself to the Father that the world was reconciled to God. That is why the prophet Isaiah taught us ahead of time to choose peace with God in Christ, saying, "Let us make peace with him; let those who are coming make peace."[109] If we banish from our soul what alienates us from love for Christ (I mean shameful conduct **[691]** and love of sinful pleasure and easy inclination to worldly lust, and also that mother and nourisher of all wickedness, monstrous error), we will become dear relatives of Christ and make peace with God, since we are joined to the Father himself through the Son in that we have received in ourselves the Word, who was begotten of him, and we cry out in the Spirit, "Abba! Father!"[110]

Therefore, those who were given to Christ came to belong to the Father, but they are not for that reason outside Christ. God the Father reigns with him and rules his own through him. The reign of the holy and consubstantial Trinity is the same, and their power over all things is one. Whatever belongs to the Son will be subject to the glory of the Son and the Father; and in turn whatever is said to be subject to the Father, this the Son will surely rule as well. That is why he says, "All mine are yours, and yours are mine." Where the com-

[105]1 Jn 2:2.

[106]The word for "pray" here is παρακαλεῖν, which is the verbal form of the title *Paraclete*, often translated "advocate," which John ascribes to Jesus in 1 Jn 2:1.

[107]Jn 14:6.

[108]2 Cor 5:19.

[109]Is 27:5-6 (LXX).

[110]Rom 8:15.

plete identity of nature is clear and evident, the opinion about their honor has no variation. It does not ascribe anything partially to one, let's say, and deny it to another, but it extends to both one and the same glory, equal in all respects. The essential heir of the divine honors of his Father, by the fact that he clearly has all things that belong to his begetter, will show that his begetter has all things. Each one is naturally revealed in the other: the Son shines forth in the Father, and the Father in turn in the Son. The divinely inspired Scriptures have given us this kind of instruction. There is one dominion over all things, and it is one of the honors that belongs to the Father. But it will belong to the Son as well, since he is the imprint of his essence and endures no dissimilarity or variance from him at all. He declared that he has been glorified by those who were given to him, **[692]** thus showing his prayer for them to be a just recompense, as it were.

What then is his request, and why does he ask for the Father's favor on those who are known to him? "I am not in the world," he says, "but they are in the world, and I am coming to you." While he was still living with the holy apostles and present with them in the flesh on earth, he was a clear and visible comfort to them. He spent time with them, as it were, and was right there, ready to help them when they were in danger. That was an encouragement to them. After all, the human mind usually takes courage and rejoices at what is visible, not at what is invisible. Now by saying this we are not suggesting that the Lord is too weak to be able to save them when he is not visibly present. Anyone who thought this would rightly be convicted of speaking nonsense. "For Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever."[111] But he knew that the disciples would be very faint at heart when they were left alone on earth, as it were, with the world roiling around them like fierce waves, ever ready to attack them with unbearable fear and critical dangers as they persist in bringing the divine word to the uninitiated.

Then he says, "I am coming to you." I will ascend inasmuch as I am not yet sitting on the throne and ruling as God along with God the Father, while these will remain "in the world." "I am asking on their behalf." They are yours, and you gave them to me, and I rightly care for them as both yours and mine. "And I have been glorified in them," because all that you have given me are yours, and yours are mine. And the statement is true. Just because those in the world have been given to Christ and thereby have come to belong to the Father, that does not mean that they have renounced glorifying him through whom they were united to God the Father. They were brought to the Father through him, but they will nonetheless remain **[693]** his. He and the Father share all things in common, including their natural divinity and authority. We have one God, whom we worship as the holy and consubstantial Trinity. And we all belong to the one true God, being subject as servants to the holy and consubstantial Trinity. **[694]**

Chapter Nine

The Son has the dignity of divinity by nature, even though he is said to have received this from the Father on account of his humanity and the form of his humiliation.

17:11 "Holy Father, protect them by your name that you have given me, so that they may be one, as we are one."

He always maintains the combination of the two facts into one. I am referring to the human nature, which possesses lowliness like ours, and the divine nature, which is pregnant with the highest glory of all. His statement is a combination of both, and as we stated in our interpretation of the previous passage, it does

[111]Heb 13:8.

not rise to the ultimate heights of divinity, and neither does it fall completely within our limitations. After all, he is God who became human, holding a kind of middle position, as it were, by the ineffable and unspeaking concurrence of the two, so that he does not depart from the limits of the true divine nature, and neither does he completely leave behind those of the human nature. His ineffable birth from God the Father exalts him, since he is the Word and the Only Begotten, to the divine nature and to the glory that reasonably comes along with this. And his humiliation brings him down, so to speak, to our level, but not as though it can overpower with violence him who is king of all with the Father. The Only Begotten could never be forced to do something contrary to his will. Rather his humiliation was self-chosen, accepted and maintained because of his love for us. **[695]** He humbled himself, that is, by his own will and not by any compulsion. He would only be found to endure the experience of humiliation unwillingly if there were someone who was strong enough to overcome him and command him to proceed with this against his will. He humbled himself, then, willingly for us. We would never be called "sons" and "gods" by grace if the Only Begotten had not entered into humiliation for us and on our behalf. When we are formed to be like him through participation in the Spirit, then we are called "children of God" and "gods." Therefore, when he says something that yokes together, so to speak, the human with the divine, do not be offended by that or let go of the admiration you should feel at the sheer skill displayed in his statement, which always and elegantly preserves for us the double character so that in the same statement, we see him who is God by nature speaking and also a true human being. He skillfully combines the lowliness of the human nature with the glory of the ineffable nature, and he blamelessly and irreproachably maintains an equal claim on both.

And how is it that when we maintain this, we are not saying that the nature of the Word was dragged down to be inferior to what it was in the beginning? To think that would involve us in the ultimate ignorance, since the divine nature is completely and entirely impassible. It does not allow turning toward anything whatsoever but maintains its utter stability. Rather we say this because the manner of his voluntary emptying necessarily implies that he is clothed in the garb of humiliation and causes the Only Begotten God, who is equal to and in the likeness of the Father and is both in him and from him, to appear inferior because the human nature is inferior to the Father. So do not be surprised when you listen to him if the Son, because of his human nature, seems to be inferior to the Father's glory. That is the reason that Paul insisted to us that he became lower than the angels when he wrote, "Jesus, who for a little while **[696]** was made lower than the angels, has been crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death."[112] Indeed, the holy angels are commanded to worship him. "When he brings the firstborn into the world, he says, 'Let all God's angels worship him.'"[113] And the holy seraphim stood around him and fulfilled the office of servants when he appeared to the prophets sitting "on a throne, high and lifted up."[114] Therefore, when it comes to speaking of the genuine birth and begetting from God the Father, what is human does not belong to the Son. But it does belong to him insofar as he became human. He always remains what he was and is and will be, but he lowered himself for us to what he was not before.

"Holy Father," he says, "protect them by your name that you have given me, so that they may be one, as we are one." He wants the disciples to be protected by the power and

[112]Heb 2:9.
[113]Heb 1:6.
[114]Is 6:1.

authority of the ineffable nature, and he beautifully and appropriately ascribes the power to save whomever he wants (and quite easily) to him who is true God by nature. By this he glorifies no other nature than his own, in the person of the Father, from whom he was begotten as God. "O Father," he says, "protect them by your name that you have given me," that is, the divine name. Again he says that the name of the divine nature has been given to him not as though he was called from not being God by nature into a newly acquired honor of divinity. In that case he would be adopted like we are, having an illegitimate glory allotted to him and a corrupt nature, which is not lawful for us to think. He would thereby have lost his natural sonship. But since, as the divine Scriptures prophesy, "The Word became flesh,"[115] that is, a human being, he says that he has received what he already possessed as God. After all, the name and the fact of divine glory could clearly not belong by nature to a human being. **[697]** Next you should know and understand in detail how he showed himself to be the living and hypostatic power of God the Father, through which the Father works all things. When he addresses the Father and says, "Protect them," he does not stop there but suitably introduces himself as acting for their preservation and as his Father's power that is active for this purpose. "Protect them," he says, "by your name that you have given me." Notice how careful his statement is. He attributes and ascribes, as it were, the oversight and control of our affairs only to the divine nature, as is fitting. But he immediately insists that the glory of the divine nature has been given to him because of the form of his human nature. He says that what already belongs to him by nature is a gift, that is, "the name that is above every name."[116] Therefore, we say that it belongs to the Son by nature since he is from the Father, but it belongs to him humanly as a gift. A human being is not God by nature, but Christ is God by nature, even though he is understood to be like us because he is from us.

He wants the disciples to be protected in their unity of thought and will, joined, as it were, in soul and spirit with each other by the bond of peace and mutual love. He wants them to be joined into an unbreakable chain of affection so that the unity that proceeds from this is such that their chosen connection with each other becomes an image of the natural unity that we know to exist in the Father and the Son. It is indestructible and invincible, not dragged by any worldly event or pleasure into a dissimilarity of wills, but rather preserved in a unity of godliness and sanctification with the power of love intact. And that is what came to pass. As we read in the Acts of the Apostles, "Now the whole group of those **[698]** who believed were of one heart and soul,"[117] that is, in the unity of the Spirit. This is also the point of Paul's phrase, "one body and one spirit."[118] "We who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread,"[119] and we have all been anointed by the one Spirit of Christ. Therefore, just as his disciples were one body, since they had partaken of one and the same Spirit, he desires them to be kept in an undisturbed unity of spirit and in unbroken agreement. If any should hold that the disciples are united in the same way the Father and the Son are one, not only in essence but also in will (since there is one will in the holy nature and one purpose in all matters), let them think this. They will not go astray from a fitting understanding, since anyone may see that there is an identity of will among those who are really Christians, even though consubstantiality in our case is not of the same kind

[115]Jn 1:14.
[116]Phil 2:9.
[117]Acts 4:32.
[118]Eph 4:4.
[119]1 Cor 10:17; cf. Rom 12:5.

as that of the Father and God the Word, who is from him and in him.

17:12-13 "While I was with them, I protected them by your name that you have given me. I guarded them, and not one of them perished except the son of perdition, so that the Scripture might be fulfilled. But now I am coming to you."

The Savior's statement quickly proceeds to a crystal-clear explanation of his meaning. That meaning was obscure at first, but now it is announced and revealed like fair weather after a storm. The blessed disciples thought that our Savior's abandonment of them would result in great harm to them. (I mean his abandonment in the flesh—as God nothing can prevent him from being with whomever he wishes.) They thought that no one could save them once Christ had ascended into heaven. They would be exposed to those who wished to harm them, **[699]** with no one to rescue them from the hand of their violent adversaries. Anyone who wanted to had the power to do anything to them and expose them to any danger without hindrance. Even though they were wise and fathers and lights of the world, we must not shrink back from saying that they should have looked not only at the incarnate presence of Christ our Savior but also should have realized that even if he were to deprive them of his presence with them in the flesh, and even if they could not see him with the eyes of the body, they should still surely have recognized that he is present and with them always by the power of his divine nature. After all, when will God lose his own attributes? What could oppose the nature that rules all things and get in the way, as if by force, preventing it from carrying out the activities that belong to it? Omnipresence is a God-befitting power and activity, ineffably filling heaven and earth, containing all things and being contained by none. God is not encompassed by a place or limited by distances or circumscribed within anything. The incorporeal nature that has no extent or quantity cannot experience such things. Therefore, since Christ is God and human at the same time, the disciples surely ought not to be unaware that even though he may be absent from them in the body, he will not entirely abandon them, but he will surely be with them according to his ineffable God-befitting power.

That is why, it seems to me, that the Savior himself said, in the foregoing passage, "Holy Father, protect them by your name that you have given me,"[120] and again here, "While I was with them, I protected them by your name that you have given me," in effect signaling to his disciples that the ability to save them was properly an activity of his divine nature, not of his presence in the flesh. And the flesh itself was not sanctified on its own but **[700]** by the presence of the Word, who was united to it. It was transformed in some way so that it had his own natural power, and it became the supplier of salvation and sanctification to all who participate in it. We should certainly not ascribe all God-befitting activity to the flesh on its own, but we should think in a more appropriate way and attribute it to the divine power of the Word. Does not the statement about protecting the disciples "by the name" of the Father mean this and nothing else? They have been protected by the glory of God.

He removes, then, the fear of thinking they are abandoned from the mind of the disciples. Returning often to the same course of thought, he assures them that they will have complete safety not by living with their teacher bodily but because he is by nature God. It is clear that he has an authority and power over all things that will have no end. That which is always the same could never be changed or undergo a transformation into what it was not, but it will nonetheless easily save them and

[120]Jn 17:11.

rescue them from every evil that befalls them. Notice once again the forethought hidden in the statement for our profit and edification. After he requests, as it were, that God the Father become their protection (I mean the protection of the holy disciples), he then says that he himself has done this, thus showing himself to have power and accomplishment equal to that of his begetter, or rather showing himself to be the hypostatic power of his begetter. He who is seen to have the same power as the one who is and is confessed to be God by nature—how could he not be thought to possess the same exact authority and nature? And he who has protected them as God "by the name" of God, having clothed himself with the glory of God-befitting accomplishments that are worthy of the title—how could he be foreign or of a different nature? Will he not rather be proved to be exactly what God by nature is? **[701]** After all, he could not do acts that are proper to God without being in his essence what we understand God to be. But again he maintains a double sense in the statements about himself because of his *oikonomia* in the flesh.

He removes, as it were, from originate nature the ability to save and protect those to whom this is due because of their godliness, and he attributes it to the Father's "name," thus ascribing God-befitting actions to the divine nature alone. That is why, even though he says that he has protected the disciples, he does not attribute the undertaking of this work to the limits of his human nature, but rather he says that it has been accomplished by God's "name." He is thus excluding himself from the act insofar as he has become and is understood to be flesh, but he is including himself in the power to protect and to accomplish God-befitting actions, insofar as he is God from God, the all-working power of the Father, the might that is not acted upon but that displays by its own character the nature from which it ineffably proceeded. Even though he says in this passage that the name of the divine nature was given to him (despite the fact that he is God by nature, since the Only Begotten sprang from God), this does no damage to the truth of the matter, nor does it exclude him from the honor and glory that are his due. Far from it. Receiving is fitting for the human nature and is very appropriately ascribed to it, since that nature has nothing on its own.

He says that he so protected his disciples and exercised such care over them that none was lost except one, whom he called the "son of perdition" since he deserved to perish because of his own choice, or rather because of his wickedness and unholiness. We should never think that the traitor among the disciples was entangled in the fowlers' snare and brought within the devil's noose by a divine and invincible decree. **[702]** Then he would be blameless when he yielded victory to the decree from above. Who can resist the decree of God? As it is, however, he is condemned as loathsome and is in a worse condition than if he had never been born.[121] Why? The wretched man suffered this by his own choice; he is not convicted by any necessity. He who was enamored with such terrible destruction is rightly called a child of perdition in that he deserves destruction and corruption and awaits the day of perdition with anguish and lamentation.

And since Christ added to his statement about him the words, "so that the Scripture might be fulfilled," we now repeat the explanation that is useful for the readers. It is not because the Scripture has said it that the traitor perished and turned aside into such wickedness that he betrayed the precious blood of Christ for a few pieces of silver. Rather it is because he was about to perish entirely, betraying the Savior because of the wickedness that was in him, that the Scripture prophesied that this would surely happen. The

[121]Mt 26:24.

Scripture cannot lie. It is the Word of God, who knows all things and holds in his own mind the conduct of the life of each person and their course from beginning to end. Indeed, the psalmist ascribes to him the knowledge of all things, both the things that have already happened and the things that are still expected to happen, saying somewhere to him, "You know all my thoughts from afar; you have traced out my path and my lying down, and you have foreseen all my ways."[122] The divine word, then, foreknowing future events and gazing at them as if they were already present, foretold to us, in addition to everything else it said about Christ, that one who was ranked among the disciples would perish as a traitor. The foreknowledge and telling of the future surely did not indicate the will and command of God, and neither did the prophecy compel the enactment of the evil that was foretold and the plot against the Savior but was rather designed to prevent it. **[703]** When Judas had this knowledge, it would surely have been possible for him, if he so willed, to avert and guard against the calamity, since his inclination can be directed wherever he wills.

But perhaps you will say, How then has Christ protected them if by the inclinations of their own wills and by their own decisions the rest are found to have escaped the devil's nets, but Judas alone was taken, wretched beyond the others? What then is the benefit of the protection mentioned here?

Well, my fine friend, we will reply, sobriety is a good thing, and guarding our thoughts is extremely profitable, along with the intense desire to do good and to practice virtue. That is how we will work out "our own salvation."[123] But this alone is not enough for the human soul. It needs assistance and grace from above to make what is difficult easy for it and to render the steep and thorny path of righteousness smooth. To learn that we have nothing at all except what comes to us by divine grace, listen to the psalmist crying out, "Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labor in vain. Unless the Lord guards the city, the guards keep watch in vain."[124]

I say, then, that we must bring our own self-control and, putting ourselves in a God-loving frame of mind, be found vigorous in carrying out our devotion to our own salvation. But in so doing we must ask God for help from above, like an invincible and impregnable suit of armor, when we have chosen to behave like men. Once God has granted this and given it to us, we can then subdue the might of our adversaries and conquer the hand of the devil if we choose not to yield to him when he invites us **[704]** to pleasure or some other kind of sin. If we give our wills to him and we are convicted of putting ourselves in his noose by our inclination to wickedness, how could we rightly blame anyone else rather than ascribing the suffering to our own evil will? Is this not what Solomon said long ago? He said, "The foolishness of a man perverts his way, and he blames God in his heart."[125] There is no doubt that this is the case. If the traitor, then, did not have equal access to the Savior's help with the other disciples, let someone prove this, and we will yield. But if he was clothed with divine grace in equal measure with the others and by his own will he fell into the pit of destruction, how could anyone say that Christ did not protect him by giving him his mercy? He would have saved him to the extent that he gave him security, if he had not chosen this calamity by his own will. His grace was conspicuous in the rest, saving those who made their own will a coworker, as it were, with the grace. This is the way the salvation of each of us is carried out.

[122]Ps 139:2-3 (Ps 138:2-3 LXX).
[123]Phil 2:12.
[124]Ps 127:1 (Ps 126:1 LXX).
[125]Prov 19:3.

"I speak these things in the world so that they may have my joy made complete in themselves."

Remember what we just said and you will have a good understanding of the meaning of this passage. He always maintained a juxtaposition of the two aspects of his person, demonstrating the magnificent divine honor in himself and, because of the *oikonomia*, not rejecting the appropriate limits of the human nature. After all, it would be strange if he wanted to deny what he willingly assumed. Lacking nothing, since he was completely perfect from the perfect Father, he emptied himself, doing this not for his own benefit but to provide us with the blessing of his emptying. **[705]** He presents himself as God and a human being in one and persuades his disciples, as it were, to realize that whether he is absent or present he will nonetheless accomplish their salvation in God. And just as he has protected them until now while he was present on earth according to his human nature, so also will he protect them when he is absent as God by the excellency of his essence. The divine nature is not located in a place, and it is not absent from anything at all. It fills all things and goes through all things and is both outside and inside everything. When he speaks to his Father and says, "Holy Father, protect them,"[126] he immediately refers to the Father's power as active in all things, which it is. In the same statement he shows that he is not external to his nature but is in it and from it and has an indivisible unity with it, even though he is understood to be in his own subsistence. "Protect them," he says, "by your name that you have given me,"[127] and again, "When I was with them, I protected them by your name that you have given me."[128] We must realize, then, that if he has already protected them by the "name" that was given to him by the Father (that is, by the glory of the divine nature, since "he gave him the name that is above every name"),[129] and if he now wants the Father to protect them by the name that was given to him, he cannot be excluded from the activity in this matter. The Father will protect those who have genuine faith in him through his own might, the Only Begotten. He will engage in no activity except through him. So if he has protected them even while he was in the flesh by the power and glory of the divine nature, how could he stop thinking the disciples are worthy of the mercy they need? And how could they ever lose the security that he provides, while the divine power of the Only Begotten abides forever and the might that he has by nature is fixed in the same person? The divine admits no turning at all or change to anything **[706]** unrighteous, but it always shines forth in its eternal attributes.

I have said these things "in the world," he says, so that our disciples "may have my joy made complete in themselves." We will next explain how or in what way this takes place, not hesitating to struggle with the obscurity of the expression. When Christ was present and living with them (I mean according to the flesh), the blessed disciples thought they would readily be delivered from every calamity and easily circumvent the danger from the Jews and remain impervious to those who would harm them. But when he ascended and was separated from them, they thought that they would readily succumb to every danger and undergo the ultimate peril since there was no one strong enough to save them and scare away the onset of their trials. For this reason our Lord Jesus Christ—neither denying his humanity that he took on once and for all nor showing himself to be in need of divine power—makes both the former and the latter clear in his statement. On the one hand he says that the

[126]Jn 17:11.
[127]Jn 17:11.
[128]Jn 17:12.
[129]Phil 2:9.

name of God has been given to him as a human being. On the other he says that mercy and protection are accomplished for his worshipers in him and through him from the Father. What lesson, then, did he wisely prepare in this passage? He wanted the blessed disciples to learn and understand well, by reflecting on the subtle implication of what he said, that even when he was with them in the flesh he did not accomplish salvation for them through that flesh but rather by the glory and omnipotent power of the divine nature. Therefore, he says, it will do no harm to the disciples for him to be absent from them in the flesh, since the divine power of the Only Begotten is able to save them easily, even though his flesh is manifestly not present.

Now we are not saying these things to devalue the holy body of Christ. By no means! Rather it is fitting for us to attribute the activity of these accomplishments **[707]** to the glory of the divine nature. Even the Lord's body itself was sanctified by the power of the Word who was united with it, thus endowing it with power in the mystical blessing for us so that it can implant its own holiness in us. The Savior himself, when he was conversing with the Jews and saying many things about his flesh, called it the true and living bread. "The bread," he says, "that I will give you is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."[130] And when they were astonished and beyond perplexed about how the nature of earthly flesh could bestow eternal life, he defended himself by saying, "The flesh profits nothing; it is the Spirit that gives life. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life."[131] Here again he says that the flesh can profit nothing, that is, toward the sanctification and vivification of those who receive it, as far as the nature of human flesh is concerned. But when one realizes and believes that it is the temple of the Word, then it will surely bestow sanctification and life, not on its own but because of God who is united to it, who is holy and is life itself. He therefore ascribes everything to the activity of the divine nature and says that his departure in the flesh will do no harm to his disciples as far as their desire to be protected is concerned. Even though he may disappear into heaven, the Savior will not be absent from those who love him. He will still be with them through the power of his divine nature.

In order, then, that they may have "my joy made complete in themselves," he says, I have spoken these things "in the world." What then is complete and perfect joy? It is to know and believe not only that Christ was a human being like us, but that along with being like us (though without sin) he is also true God. It is clear and there is no doubt that **[708]** he surely has the ability to save his worshipers whenever he wants, even if he is not seen to be present in the flesh. This fact will enable us to have perfect joy, since we always have an ally near us who is strong enough to rescue us from every evil.

17:14-15 "I have given them your word, and the world has hated them because they do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. I am not asking you to take them out of the world, but I ask you to protect them from the evil one."

He highlights the most necessary bestowal of favor from above and from the Father on us, which he says is practically owed as a just and fitting reward to those who face danger on his account. The world "hates" on account of God those who are devoted to God and who follow the laws that he decreed and who place no value on worldly pleasure, who also fittingly receive help and grace from him as well as perseverance in the good. Those who courageously rely on him and take up the battle for his sake, not fearing to encounter dangers

[130]Jn 6:51.
[131]Jn 6:63.

beyond their strength—how could they not receive a reward commensurate with their goal? That is why the Savior says, "I have given them your word, and the world has hated them because they do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world." They received, Father, with great gladness, he says, your word that came to them through me, that is, the gospel proclamation, which easily rescues those who welcome it from a worldly life and earthly thinking. For this reason they are hated by the world, that is, by those who choose to set their mind on earthly matters and who love the disgusting, hedonistic **[709]** life. The words of the saints are not pleasing to those in the world since they always make light of the troubles of this world and show the worldly life to be vile, accusing its sin and shooting sharp rebukes at those who think it is pleasurable to fall and to be entangled in worldly evils. They wage war against all greed, reject the love of glory and teach us to avoid the love of money, which is the mother of all evils, and put it as far away as possible. They further command those who have been trapped in the devil's nets to escape from the ancient deception and to take themselves to the God of all.

They are hated, Father, for this reason, he says. They are unbearable to those in the world not because they have been condemned for anything shameful or unholy but because I have given them your word so that they are thereby outside of the world, just as I am. Conduct and life in Christ is completely severed from earthly thinking and the worldly state of affairs. By following that life as much as possible we ourselves will escape being reckoned with those in the world. That is why the divinely inspired Paul ordered us to follow in his footsteps.[132] We will be good followers when we desire to contemplate only what is above the world, set our mind above fleshly thinking and gaze only at what is heavenly. He ranks himself with his disciples on account of his human nature. By imitating that nature (since he is understood to be human) we attain every kind of virtue, as we just said. Outrunning every worldly sin, we are made strangers and foreigners to the evils in the world. Just as the divine Paul writes to us about himself **[710]** and Christ, "Through whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world,"[133] he also commands somewhere else, "Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ."[134] Now Paul did not imitate our Lord Jesus Christ in his capacity as creator and Lord of all. After all, he did not establish for us another sky besides the one that has been created, and neither did he ever reveal new seas or a new earth. How did he imitate him? Clearly it was by fashioning in his own life and conduct an admirable example of the way of life we received from Christ, insofar as it was possible for him to attain it. For who could be equal to Christ?

Christ, then, yokes himself to us on account of his human nature, or rather, to speak more accurately, he initiates in us the blessing of departing from the world through the life that is above the world. (The gospel teaching and way of life are above the world.) He says that he does not "belong to the world" and that we are like this too since his divine word has taken up residence in our souls. And just as the world hates me, he says, so also it will hate them. The world hates Christ in the sense that it fights against his words and refuses to accept his exhortation, instead yielding its whole mind to inclinations to wickedness. And just as it hates our Savior Jesus Christ it has also hated the disciples themselves, who deliver his word on his behalf. Paul does this when he says, "So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we

[132]Cf. 1 Pet 2:21.

[133]Gal 6:14.

[134]1 Cor 11:1.

entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God."[135]

What then is his request after he shows that the disciples are hated by those attached to the evils of the world? "I am not asking you to take them out of the world," he says, "but I ask you to protect them from the evil one." Christ does not want the saints to be delivered from human affairs or from life in the body when they have not yet **[711]** finished the course of their apostleship or distinguished themselves in godly virtue. Rather, after they have finished living with those in the world and guiding them to conduct that is pleasing to God, he wants them to be taken above with shining accomplishments to dwell with the chorus of the holy angels. In fact we find one of the saints approaching the virtue-loving God, singing, "Do not take me up in the midst of my days."[136] That is because it is not without loss for devout souls to leave their life in the flesh before they have perfected, as it were, their virtuous conduct. That is also why the law of Moses teaches us that sinners are visited with premature death, as a punishment and as wrath, and often repeats the warning to stand aloof from evil "that you may not die before your time."[137] Besides, if the saints chose to separate themselves from our affairs, it would do no small harm to those who are weak in the faith, or rather they would not be led to godliness at all since they would have no one who could do this. Knowing this, Paul says, "It is better to depart and be with Christ, but to remain in the flesh is more necessary for you."[138] Christ, therefore, in his care for the salvation of the uninstructed, says that those in the world must not be left without light and salt. So rather than that, he asks that the saints be protected and always remain untouched by the malice of the evil one, shunning the assault of temptations by the power of his almighty Father.

Next we must remark that he refers to his own word that comes from him (we mean the gospel message) as the word of God the Father, showing that he is not another besides the Father, on account of their consubstantiality. We will find in the gospel writings that the Jewish people were amazed by him **[712]** because he taught them "as one having authority and not as their scribes."[139] They were seen to apply the teaching of the law in every case in their conversations with them. Our Lord Jesus Christ, however, did not at all follow the types in shadows and letters, but he let his own word shine with divine authority. "It was said to the ancients, 'You shall not commit adultery,'" he says, "but I say to you, 'You shall not lust.'"[140] Though the law expressly says concerning the divine words that one must not add to them or take away from them,[141] Christ took away from and also added to them as he transformed the types into truth. Therefore, he cannot be considered to be one of those under the law, that is, a creature. Whoever is classified as a slave by nature surely would have to be subject to the law. Christ, then, presented his own word as the word of the Father, since he is the Word who is in the Father and of him, who makes known the will of the divine nature—I mean the only true divine nature, which is understood to be in the Father and in the Son and in the Holy Spirit.

17:16-17 "They do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. Holy Father, protect them by the truth; your word is truth."

Next with these words he indicates and makes clear why he needs to ascend to God the

[135]2 Cor 5:20.
[136]Ps 102:24 (Ps 101:25 LXX).
[137]Eccles 7:17.
[138]Phil 1:23-24.
[139]Mt 7:29.
[140]Mt 5:27-28. Cyril is paraphrasing here.
[141]Deut 4:2.

Father and why it is so appropriate for him to do so, since he is still understood to be our mediator and high priest and Paraclete according to the Holy Scripture. He ascended so that if we should ever stumble and fall short of the right thought and action, or we are overcome by unexpected temptation or buffeted by the devil's malice, **[713]** he may approach his Father on our behalf in the form that is appropriate for mediation[142] and join him in bestowing blessings on those who are worthy. That would be appropriate for him, since he is God by nature. Those who have received your word through me, Father, he says, have my image shining in themselves, and they have become conformed to your genuine Son and by imitation of him have escaped the flood of worldly wickedness, making themselves foreigners and strangers to worldly pleasure in this life and to all shameful conduct. Therefore, "Protect them by your truth," since the purity in Christ is by nature and beyond thought. He is the true God, after all. He is not capable of and neither can he endure falling into sin, but he is the source of all virtue and of the glory that is found in sanctification. The divine and omnipotent nature could do nothing other than what is proper to it and belongs to it. The holy disciples (or any who believe in him, for that matter) have purity that is no longer defiled by worldly evils, only through patience and grace from above. That grace takes away the defilement of past offenses and the accusations from their past life, or even more, it brings them the glory of a life of sanctification, though continuance in it is not easy. Paul in his great wisdom makes this clear, it seems to me, when he says, "If you think you are standing, watch out that you do not fall."[143] Our lives are always tossed about in various ways as the evil one tempts us without ceasing and wants to assail us at all times and despoil by his evil machinations those who have already been purified, if he can. "His food is well-chosen," as the prophet says.[144] After testifying to his disciples, then, that their life was outside the world and that they were conformed by imitation to his own essential purity, **[714]** he asks that they be protected by the Father, practically saying:
All-holy Father, if they were in the world, that is, if they lived a life that is honored in this world, sowing the seed of fleeting earthly pleasure in their mind, they would have engraved the foul image, as it were, of the evil one on themselves. Then he would not have attacked them or armed himself against his own children, since he would have in them the likeness of his own wickedness. But since, in imitation of me, they ridicule the deceit of this world, they are outside the world. Moreover their conduct is plastered with the brilliant form of my incomparable glory. Therefore, Satan, who always shrieks at the saints, lies in wait as their bitter enemy. So of course I want them to be protected. And they cannot be protected apart from your truth, that is, me. I am by nature your truth, Father, your essential and living and hypostatic Word.

We must suppose that this is what he thinks is right to say. See how in all his statements, so to speak, he insinuates his person into whichever of the Father's activities is under consideration and includes himself, probably to demonstrate the truth of the statement, "All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being."[145] A little earlier he asked his Father to protect the disciples "by the name" that had been given to him.[146] In this passage, however, he wants his request on their behalf to be fulfilled "by the truth" of the Father. Why is that? Why does he want to vary the words?

[142]I.e., in his human nature.
[143]1 Cor 10:12.
[144]Hab 1:16.
[145]Jn 1:3.
[146]Jn 17:11.

Surely it is to show that the activity of the Father, carried out through him in mercy to the saints, is not uniform. In the former passage, when he says that the disciples should be protected "by the name" of the Father, that is, the glory and power of the divine nature, and that they should elude the grasp of those who want to harm them, [**715**] he declares that aid will be given to those who are in danger on account of God, in whatever happens to them, in the secret manner that Christ revealed to his disciples at the proper time when he said, "Simon, Simon, behold! Satan has asked to sift all of you like wheat, but I have prayed for you that your own faith may not fail."[147] Many of our affairs are ordered secretly, with Christ caring for and shielding the life of each person. But here, when he says, "Protect them by the truth," he indicates clearly that what happens through the shining of the truth leads to the understanding of the truth. No one could progress toward the knowledge of the truth without the illumination of the Spirit, and no one could work out for themselves an accurate understanding of divine dogmas, at least with what is accessible to human beings. The mysteries in the divinely inspired Scriptures are beyond our understanding, but the gift is not without glory. I am referring to the gift of having even a moderate knowledge of Christ.

Now the blessed Peter, when he confessed the Lord to be truly the "Son of the living God," appropriately heard the reply, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father in heaven."[148] He reveals to the saints his own Son, who is the truth, not allowing Satan to lead the mind of the believers astray to false knowledge. In their season Hymenaeus and Alexander relied on him and "made a shipwreck of their faith,"[149] rejecting the right message of the truth. Being protected by the Father, then, by the name of God and the truth, is of great avail in continuing in right thoughts and actions so that we may not fail to make the light of our actions shine and so that we may not, by turning aside to ignorance, stray far from the dogmas of true godliness. And this could easily be the case for us as well when we show ourselves to be outside the world, [**716**] while not denying our birth in the world. All people have been formed from the clay and from the earth, as it is written,[150] but by their works they are distinguished from the life of those in the world. Even though they walk on earth, those who love conformity with Christ are citizens in heaven.

We must also note that he very profitably calls the Father "holy" in this passage, reminding him, as it were, that since he is holy, he takes joy in the saints. All things are holy that are separated from the defilement of the world. Those things are naturally in Christ by his likeness to the Father, but they are inserted and introduced into the holy disciples through sanctification that is by grace and through the glory and goodness of their lives. That is how one may be formed in the divine image that is above the world. [**717**]

Chapter Ten

Christ is not holy by participation with another, and neither is the sanctification through the Spirit foreign to his substance.

17:18-19 "As you have sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, so that they also may be sanctified in truth."

He has just called the Father "holy" and asked that the disciples be protected by the truth, that is, by his own Spirit (since "the Spirit is

[147]Lk 22:31-32.
[148]Mt 16:16-17.
[149]1 Tim 1:19.
[150]Job 33:6.

the truth," as John says,[151] and he is "the Spirit of the truth,"[152] that is, of the Only Begotten himself). He then says that he has "sent" them into the world in imitation of his own sending. After all, Jesus is the "apostle and high priest of our confession," as Paul says,[153] according to the form that is fitting for his humanity and the manner of his emptying. He says that once the holy apostles had been selected, they needed to be sanctified by the holy Father, who implants the Holy Spirit in them through the Son. In truth the disciples would never have reached such a level of glory that they would be lights for the whole world, and neither would they have withstood the temptations of the tempter or the assaults of the devil, if their minds were not sealed by participation in the Spirit and **[718]** empowered by him to carry out an unheard-of and superhuman command, as they were led easily by the light of the Spirit to perfect knowledge of the divinely inspired Scripture and the holy dogmas of the church. For example, the Savior gathered them together after the resurrection, as it is written, and instructed them to proclaim grace through faith throughout the whole world, and "ordered them not to leave Jerusalem but to wait there for the promise of the Father,"[154] which they heard him speak through the voice of the holy prophets as well. For it shall come to pass in those days, says the Lord, "I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh."[155] The Savior himself also explicitly promised them that the Spirit would be poured on them, saying, "I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth,"[156] and again, "And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Paraclete."[157] The Spirit belongs to God the Father, but he no less belongs to the Son as well. However, they are not one and another, and neither is the Spirit understood to subsist divisibly in another, nor does he actually do so. Rather, since the Son is from the Father and in the Father by nature, as the true fruit of his essence, the Spirit, who belongs to the Father by nature, is brought upon us. He is poured out from the Father and supplied to creation through his Son, not in the manner of a servant or as an underling but, as I just said, proceeding from the very essence of God the Father, poured out on those who are worthy to receive him through the Word, who comes from the Father and is of the same substance with him. He manifestly exists on his own. Since he always remains and exists in him, he exists in unity and at the same time **[719]** separately, as it were. We maintain that the Son has his own subsistence, but he also exists in his begetter, and his begetter has him in himself. The Spirit of the Father is clearly the Spirit of the Son, and when the Father sends or promises to provide him to the saints, the Son also bestows him as his own on account of the identity of essence that he has with the Father.[158] Furthermore the Father carries out whatever he does through the Son. The Son himself has clearly pointed this out to us with the words, "It is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Paraclete will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you."[159] In another passage he says, "And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Paraclete."[160] In these passages he himself is explicitly promising to send us the Paraclete.

Since the disciples, who keep my word, have been sent on a mission in the world in imitation of mine, he says, "Protect them, holy

[151] 1 Jn 5:6.
[152] Jn 16:13.
[153] Heb 3:1.
[154] Acts 1:4.
[155] Joel 2:28.
[156] Jn 16:12-13.
[157] Jn 14:16.
[158] This is another example of Cyril's resonance with the idea of the Spirit proceeding from the Father and the Son.
[159] Jn 16:7.
[160] Jn 14:16.

Father, by your truth," that is, by your Word, in whom and through whom the sanctifying Spirit both exists and proceeds. And what is the Savior's aim in saying this? He asked the Father for that sanctification that is in and through the Spirit to be given to us. He wants what we had from the beginning of our creation when we were first created by God to be rekindled in us. We make this claim because the Only Begotten mediates and fulfills the role of Paraclete on our behalf before the Father in heaven. But in order to free our discussion of this matter from obscurity and to clarify for our hearers the meaning of what we have said, come, let us say a few words about the creation of the first man.

The divinely inspired Moses said of him that God took dust from the ground and formed the first human being. He then goes on to relate how God gave life to the creature after he finished shaping him. He says, "He breathed into **[720]** his face the breath of life," indicating that the soul was not given to the man without sanctification through the Spirit and that the soul was surely not bare or devoid of the divine nature. That which has such an earthly origin could never be seen to be in the image of the highest unless it had obtained and received its shape through the Spirit, like a beautiful mask, by the will of God. Since his Spirit is the perfect image of the essence of the Only Begotten, according to what Paul wrote, "For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son,"[161] he makes those in whom he dwells to be conformed to the image of the Father, that is, the Son. So also all things are brought up by the Son to the Father, from whom he comes, through the Spirit. He desires, then, the nature of humanity to be renewed and reshaped into its original image by communion with the Spirit so that, by being clothed with that original grace and being shaped again in conformity with him, we may be found superior to and more powerful than sin, which reigns in this world, and we may devote ourselves only to the love of God. By striving with all our might to do whatever is good and by setting our mind above the pleasures of the flesh, we may preserve intact the beauty of the image that is implanted in us. This is the spiritual life, and this is the meaning of worship in the Spirit.

Now to sum up the whole matter in a few words, Christ called down upon us the original gift of humanity, that is, sanctification through the Spirit and fellowship with the divine nature, with his disciples being a kind of first fruits of those who received it. So the saying is true that "it is the farmer who does the work who ought to have the first share of the crops."[162] But so that even here he may "have first place"[163] (since it was fitting for him to be the firstborn among many **[721]** brothers, as it were, and to be understood to be like us, and on account of that likeness to us to be viewed as, and to be, the beginning, door and way of every blessing for us), he very appropriately added what follows, that is, "For their sakes I sanctify myself."

Now this statement is hard to explain and hard to understand. Nevertheless the Word, who enlightens all things and "reveals the depths out of darkness,"[164] will make this mystery clear to us as well. According to the customary usage of the law, whatever is brought to God by someone as an offering or gift sacred to him is said to be sanctified, as, for example, every firstborn among the Israelites who opens the womb. "Sanctify to me every firstborn who opens the womb,"[165] said God to the noble Moses, that is, offer and dedicate and set down as holy. But we certainly do not say, and neither would we listen to anyone else who does, that

[161]Rom 8:29.

[162]2 Tim 2:6.
[163]Col 1:18.
[164]Job 12:22.
[165]Ex 13:2.

God commanded Moses to bestow sanctification through the Spirit on anyone. After all, the limitations of originate nature do not extend far enough to be able to accomplish anything like this, but this belongs to and is properly ascribed to God alone. For example, when he wanted to appoint elders along with Moses, he did not command Moses himself to bestow sanctification on those who were chosen, but he clearly said that he would take from the Spirit that is on him and give it to each of those who were called.[166] The power to sanctify through communion with the Spirit belongs only to the nature that rules all things. And Solomon himself establishes for us with utter clarity the meaning of sanctification (I mean according to the customary usage of the law) when he says, "It is a snare for a man hastily to sanctify anything that is his, for after the vow, repentance comes."[167]

Therefore, we maintain that the Son sanctifies himself, understanding sanctification according to customary usage **[722]** to mean offering and setting apart. He offered himself as a sacred and holy sacrifice to God the Father, "reconciling the world to himself"[168] and bringing into friendly relationship with him that which had fallen from it, that is, the human race. "For he is our peace," as it is written.[169] Indeed, our reconciliation to God through Christ the Savior could have been accomplished in no other way than through communion in the Spirit and sanctification. That which knits us together, as it were, and unites us to God is the Holy Spirit. When we receive the Spirit, we are made participants and sharers in the divine nature, and we receive the Father himself through the Son and in the Son. The wise John writes to us concerning him, "By this we know that we remain in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit."[170] And what does Paul say about this? "And because you are sons," he says, "God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our heart, crying, 'Abba! Father!'"[171] implying that if we had remained without participation in the Spirit, we would never have known that God was in us at all, and that if we had not been enriched by the Spirit that puts us in the rank of sons, we would never have been sons of God at all. What kind of addition would it be, and how could we have been shown to be sharers in the divine nature, if God were not in us and we were not in him by being called through participation in the Spirit? But as it is we are participants and sharers in the essence that is above all things, and we are called temples of God. That is because the Only Begotten sanctified himself for our sins, that is, he offered and presented himself as a holy sacrifice for a pleasing aroma to God the Father, so that by intervening as God to separate and wall off human nature from sin, **[723]** nothing may stand in the way of our ability to draw near to God and have fellowship with him, namely, through participation in the Holy Spirit, who reshapes us into righteousness and holiness and into our original image. If sin stands in the way and separates humanity from God, then righteousness will surely join us to him and set us by God's side, as it were, with nothing to come between us. We have been justified by faith in Christ, "who was handed over for our trespasses," as it is written, "and was raised for our justification."[172] The whole of human nature was restored in him, as the first fruits of the race, to newness of life, and by ascending to its own beginning, as it were, it was refashioned into sanctification. "Sanctify them, O Father," he says, "by your truth (that is, by me); for

[166]Num 11:17.
[167]Prov 20:25.
[168]2 Cor 5:19.
[169]Eph 2:14.
[170]1 Jn 4:13.
[171]Gal 4:6.
[172]Rom 4:25.

your Word is truth (that is, again, I am),"[173] because I have sanctified myself for them, that is, I have offered and presented myself, one dying for all, that I may transform them into newness of life and they may be sanctified by the truth, that is, by me.

Now that we have clarified the passage and understood it in the sense we just laid out, we will not shrink back from proceeding to other explanations as well. The eager desire to track down the meaning of difficult passages would be highly prized, I think, both by those who have the desire to do it and by those who listen to them and want to learn. Our Lord Jesus Christ said that he sanctified himself for us so that we too might be sanctified "by the truth." Come, then, let us follow the dogmas of the church once again, not turning aside from the true canon of the faith, and let us consider as carefully as possible how he is sanctified, though he is already holy by nature, so that we too may be sanctified. We maintain that the Only Begotten, who was God by nature and in the form of and **[724]** equal to God the Father, has emptied himself according to the Scriptures[174] and has become human from a woman, taking on himself all things that are proper to humanity except for sin. He ineffably united himself to our nature of his own will that he might restore it first in himself and through himself to that beauty that it had in the beginning. He was for us the second Adam, that is, the heavenly man. He was the chief of all and the first fruits of those who are recreated to newness of life, that is, in incorruption and righteousness and sanctification through the Spirit. All this he did so that he might convey his good attributes through himself to the entire race. That is why, even though he was life by nature, he came to be among the dead, so that by destroying our death in us, he may refashion us into his own life. And even though he was the righteousness of God the Father, he became sin for us. As the prophet says, "he bears our sins,"[175] and he was counted with us among the transgressors[176] so that he might justify us on account of himself and tear up the "record that stood against us, nailing it to his cross," as it is written.[177] And here too, even though he is holy by nature as God, he is sanctified for us in the Holy Spirit in the sense that he gives all creation participation in the Holy Spirit for its continuance and preservation and sanctification. No one else sanctifies him, but he brings about for himself the sanctification of his own flesh. He receives and accepts his own Spirit insofar as he is human, but he gives the Spirit to himself as God. He did this for us, not for himself, so that originating from him and in him the grace of sanctification might extend to the entire race. Just as through the transgression and disobedience of Adam, the first fruits **[725]** of the race, our nature was condemned to death and heard through the first man the sentence, "Earth you are and to earth you will return";[178] in the same way, I think, through the obedience and righteousness of Christ, insofar as he was under the law even though as God he was the lawgiver, blessing and restoration of life through the Spirit could extend to our entire nature. The Spirit refashions to incorruption that which had been utterly corrupted by sin and remolds to newness of life that which was decrepit from sluggishness and verging on obliteration.

But perhaps you will say, How then was he who was holy by nature sanctified, and through participation at that? And in what sense does he, who gives his own Spirit to all who are worthy to receive it (I mean, both above and on earth), give himself the same Spirit? Indeed, these matters are hard to

[173]Jn 17:17.
[174]Phil 2:6-7.
[175]Is 53:4.
[176]Is 53:12.
[177]Col 2:14.
[178]Gen 3:19.

fathom and comprehend and are difficult to explain when you are thinking of the bare Word (who arose from the Father) still standing apart, as it were, from the sanctified human nature. If, however, you marvel at the incomprehensible union and coming together with the flesh, and you have in mind him who is God by nature and has become a human being like us, you will no longer think it strange. You will expel all distress from your mind and set your thoughts on the Son, who is God and a human being in the same person, and so you will not think that human properties must be rejected, even though they are imported to the only one who is Son by nature, I mean Christ. After all, should we not consider mortality to be completely alien to the Word who gives life to all things?

You will reply that he has suffered this according to the flesh, since the body is receptive of death. He is said to have died for this reason: his own body died.

Your reasoning is altogether sound, and what you say is correct. According to the *oikonomia* he did in fact allow his body to die for us, **[726]** and he breathed his own life into it again, but not to rescue himself from the bonds of death, since he is understood to be God. He came among us and became human not for himself but to open a way out of death for human nature, through him and in him, and provide a way back to our original incorruption. Therefore, you should understand the manner of his sanctification along the same lines. Can we at all claim that the body from the earth is holy, at least as far as its own nature is concerned, even without receiving sanctification from God, who is holy by nature? How could this be? How then could we conceive any difference between the body from the earth and the essence that is holy and sanctifying by nature? If it is true to say that all rational creatures (and in general all things that have been called into being and rank among originate beings) do not possess sanctification as the fruit of their own nature but borrow that grace, as it were, from him who is holy by nature, would it not be the height of absurdity to think that the flesh has no need of God, who sanctifies all things? Since the flesh was not holy of itself, it was therefore sanctified—even in the case of Christ—by the Word dwelling in it and sanctifying his own temple through the Holy Spirit and transforming it to carry out the activities of his own nature. That is why the body of Christ is understood to be holy and sanctifying. It has become a temple, as we just said, of the Word who is united to it bodily, as Paul says.[179] That is why the Holy Spirit descends on him from heaven in the form of a dove. The wise John testified to this so that we may know once again that the Spirit descended on Christ first, as the first fruits of the renewed nature, insofar as he was a human being who could receive sanctification. Now we are certainly not saying that Christ became holy according to the flesh at the time when the Baptist "saw the Spirit descending."[180] **[727]** He was holy as an embryo in the womb. Indeed, it was said to the blessed virgin, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you."[181] No, the sight was given to the Baptist as a sign. Nevertheless we do hold that his flesh was sanctified by the Spirit in that the Word, who is holy by nature and is from the Father, anoints his own temple with the Spirit, just like the rest of creation. The psalmist knew this as he contemplated the person of the Only Begotten in his humanity and exclaimed, "Therefore, God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness beyond your companions."[182] When the Son anoints his own temple, the Father is said to do it, since he carries out that activity in no other way than

[179]Col 2:9.
[180]Jn 1:32.
[181]Lk 1:35.
[182]Ps 45:7 (Ps 44:8 LXX).

through the Son. Whatever the Son does is ascribed to the Father from whom he exists. The Father is a root, as it were, and source for his own offspring.

It is not surprising if he says that he sanctifies himself, even though he is holy by nature, since the Scriptures call the Father his God,[183] even though he is God by nature. I think that this should rightly and truly be ascribed to the needs of human nature and to the form that is fitting for us. That would not miss the mark. Just as he died for us according to the flesh as a human being, even though he is God by nature, and just as he called the Father his God, ranking himself among originate beings and putting himself under subjection on account of his human nature, even though he is Lord of all; so also he maintains that he sanctifies himself for us, so that this act may extend to us in the first fruits of our renewed nature, and in him we too may be "sanctified by the truth," that is, by the Holy Spirit. For the truth is the Spirit, as John says.[184] His Spirit is not another besides the Son, at least in terms of essence, since the Spirit is in him and proceeds through him. **[728]**

He says that he was "sent into the world," even though he was in it before the incarnation. He was in the world, even if "the world did not know him," as it is written,[185] indicating that the manner of the sending was precisely that he was anointed by the Holy Spirit, insofar as he became human, and he was the "angel of the great counsel,"[186] in the likeness of the prophetic office. And when he says that the disciples have been chosen like him and sent by him to announce the heavenly proclamation of the gospel to the world, he says that they must be "sanctified by the truth," so that they can finish the course of their apostleship with nobility and vigor. **[729]**

[183]Jn 20:17.
[184]1 Jn 5:6.
[185]Jn 1:10.
[186]Is 9:6.

Chapter Eleven

The Son is by nature one with God his Father, and he is in the Father, and the Father is in him according to the essential bond and mode of their unity. Likewise we ourselves, when we have received faith in him, are rendered one with each other and with God, bodily and spiritually.

17:20-21 "I ask not only on behalf of these but also on behalf of those who believe in me through their word, that they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be one in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me."

Christ has appeared as the first fruits, as it were, of those who are being re-created into newness of life, and he is the first heavenly man. As Paul says, "The second Adam is the Lord from heaven."[187] That is why he said, "No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man."[188] In close connection with the first fruits, indeed far closer than others, were the first to be chosen as his disciples and to hold the honor of following him. They were eyewitnesses beholding his glory. They always learned from him and lived with him and received the first fruits of his benefits in their own souls. They were, therefore, and are the precious and more honored members of "the head of the body, the church,"[189] who is the head of all and over all. **[730]** So he asks that the blessing and sanctification of the Spirit be sent down upon them from the Father. And that surely takes place through him. It could not be otherwise, since he himself is the living, true, almighty, and active wisdom and power of his begetter.

But so that none of those who are not very

[187]1 Cor 15:47.
[188]Jn 3:13.
[189]Col 1:18.

skilled at attending to the divinely inspired Scriptures may casually suppose that he asked for the descent of the divine Spirit only on the disciples and that he asked nothing for us who came after them and were born in the first ages since, the mediator between God and humanity, the Paraclete and high priest of our souls, appropriately reins in ahead of time the ignorant suppositions of such people and adds these words to his statement: "I ask not only on behalf of these but also on behalf of those who believe in me through their word." It would be absurd if through the one (I mean the first Adam) condemnation extended to all, and the dishonorable image of the man of dust was worn even by those who had not sinned at the time when our forefather broke the command that was given to him; but when Christ (who appeared as the heavenly man) dwelt among us, those who are called by him to righteousness (namely, the righteousness that is by faith) should not be molded again into his image. Just as we say that the foul image of the man of dust[190] is seen in types and in a form that bears the filth of sin and the weakness of death and decay and the uncleanness of fleshly pleasure and earthly thinking, so also we think that the image of the heavenly man (that is, Christ) shines with purity and sincerity, with perfect incorruption and life and sanctification.

It was impossible for us to be restored, once we had fallen because of the original transgression, back to our original beauty except **[731]** by attaining an ineffable communion and union with God. That is how the nature of those on earth was ordered in the beginning. No one could have union with God except through participation in the Holy Spirit, who implants his own attribute of sanctification in us and refashions into his own life the nature that was subject to decay. In this way he leads those who lack this glory back to God and to being conformed to him. The Son is the perfect image of the Father, and his Spirit is the natural likeness of the Son. That is why the Spirit refashions, as it were, human souls to himself and engraves the divine form into them and seals them with the image of the essence that is highest of all.

Our Lord Jesus Christ, then, asks not only on behalf of the twelve disciples but on behalf of all who would in every subsequent age yield to and believe the words that lead the hearers to receive sanctification through faith and to be purified by participation in the Holy Spirit. He thought it would not be right to leave us in doubt about the contents of his prayer so that we might learn from it what sort of people we should be and what path of righteousness we should pursue to carry out what is pleasing to him. What then does he pray? "That they may be one," he says. "As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be one in us." He asks, then, for the bond of love and agreement and peace to bring the believers together in spiritual unity, a unity of agreement in all things and of inseparable harmony of their souls, so that they may imitate the imprint of the natural and essential unity that we see in the Father and the Son. **[732]** But the bond of love in us and the power of concord will not completely prevail to the point of being unchangeable, as the Father and the Son are, since they preserve their unity by the identity of their essence. Their union is natural and true and may be seen in the definition of their being, but our unity imitates the form of their true unity. After all, how could the antitype be completely equal to the archetype? The semblance of truth is not conceptually the same as the truth itself. It looks the same, but it is distinct even though the distinction is not occasioned by actual differences.

When the heterodox think they can overturn the identity of nature with God the Father and with it his unity with the Son, they bring our statement forward as a proof and basis for their blasphemy, saying, Just as we are

[190] 1 Cor 15:49.

all one not by having identical bodies or by mixing our souls with each other, but in a temperament and disposition of love and an identical will and agreement to do God's will, so also the Son is one with the Father. We will surely reject this as ignorant and completely stupid. Why? Because matters that transcend us will not correspond to the way things are among us, and what is incorporeal will not be subject to the necessities of bodies. Neither will the things of God follow the principles of human affairs. Now if nothing at all separates or distinguishes us from God, then let the things of God be understood to be just like our affairs. But if there is an inconceivable distinction between us and God, why do they set up the weaknesses of our own nature as a rule and canon for God, subjecting the nature that is mightier than all necessity to the necessities of our weaknesses? They are caught doing something absurd and **[733]** unreasonable. They are constructing the archetypes from the types and the truth from those things that imitate the truth. They are giving the second place of honor to that which has the first, and arriving at their conception of the first through those things that have second place after it.

So that we may not seem to stray from the text by dwelling too long on this issue, we must repeat the following point: when Christ cites the essential unity that the Father has with him and he has with the Father as an image and type of the inseparable friendship and concord and unity of kindred souls, he wants us to be blended with one another, so to speak, by the power of the holy and consubstantial Trinity so that the entire body of the church may be one, ascending in Christ by the joining and concurrence of two peoples into one perfect whole. As Paul says, "For he is our peace; in his flesh he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us. He has abolished the law with its commandments and ordinances, that he might create in himself one new humanity in place of the two, thus making peace, and might reconcile both groups to God in one body through the cross, thus putting to death that hostility through it."[191] Indeed, this is what he accomplished, since the believers in Christ were of one soul with one another and received one heart, as it were, by their complete likeness in godliness and by their obedience of faith and their virtuous mind.

I, at least, think that what I have said does not stray from the fitting goal but rather is needful. But since the meaning of the passage forces us into deeper contemplation, and the Savior particularly provokes this **[734]** when he says, "As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be one in us," we must carefully consider what explanation of these words we should give. In the foregoing we said (not unintelligently) that the unity of concord and agreement among believers should imitate the manner of the divine union and the essential identity and complete interweaving of the holy Trinity. But here we want to point out a natural unity by which we are all connected with one another and with God. Perhaps we do not even fall short of a corporeal unity (I mean with one another) even though we are separated by different bodies, with each one of us withdrawing, as it were, into our own circumscribed hypostasis. After all, Peter is not Paul, for example, and neither could he be spoken of as such, nor is Paul Peter, even though both may be understood to be one by the union they have on account of Christ. Therefore, since the natural unity between the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit is acknowledged (since we believe in and glorify one divine nature in the holy Trinity), come, let us consider how we too are found to be one with one another and with God both corporeally and spiritually. The Only Begotten shone forth for us from the very essence of God the Father and had his Father completely in his own nature. He then "became

[191]Eph 2:14-16.

flesh," according to the Scriptures,[192] and mixed himself, as it were, with our nature through the unimaginable coming together and union with this body from the earth. Thus he who is God by nature is called and truly becomes the heavenly man. He is not a God-bearer, as some think, who have no detailed understanding of the depth of the mystery. He is God and a human being in the same person[193] so that by uniting in himself, as it were, things that are very different by nature and essentially distinct from each other he may make humanity share and participate in the divine nature. **[735]** The communion and abiding presence of the Holy Spirit extended to us, beginning through Christ and in Christ first, when he became human like us and was anointed and sanctified—even though he is by nature God, in that he arose from the Father—and sanctified his own temple by the Holy Spirit along with all creation, which came to be through him and to which sanctification applies. The mystery of Christ, then, has become a beginning and a way for us to attain participation in the Holy Spirit and union with God. We are all sanctified in him in the way that has already been explained.

In order that we too may be mixed together and come into unity with God and one another, even though the difference between each of us makes us exist individually in terms of our bodies and souls, the Only Begotten manufactured a means for that to happen, devised by his wisdom and the will of the Father. By one body, that is, his own, he blesses those who believe in him through mystical participation and makes them to be of the same body as himself and one another. Who could divide or separate from their natural union with one another those who are bound together through his one holy body into unity with Christ? If "we all partake of the one bread,"[194] then we are all made one body, since Christ cannot be divided. That is why the church is called the "body of Christ" and we are members of it individually, according to Paul's understanding.[195] We are all united in the one Christ through his holy body since we receive the one indivisible body in our own bodies, and so we owe our members to him rather than to ourselves. Christ is classified as the head, and the church is called the rest of the body, as it is composed of individual members. Paul proves this when he says, "We must no longer **[736]** be children, tossed to and fro and blown about by every wind of doctrine, by people's trickery, by their craftiness in deceitful scheming. But speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body's growth in building itself up in love."[196] And when we come into participation with his holy body, we obtain a bodily union (I mean with Christ). Paul again testifies to this when he says concerning the mystery of godliness, "In former generations this mystery was not made known to humankind, as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit: that is, the Gentiles have become fellow heirs and sharers in the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel."[197] If we are all members of the same body with one another in Christ—and not only with one another but also with him who is in us through

[192] Jn 1:14.

[193] ἐν ταὐτῷ. Literally "in the same." The Greek does not have "person."

[194] 1 Cor 10:17.

[195] 1 Cor 12:27.

[196] Eph 4:14-16.

[197] Eph 3:5-6. Cyril's citation of this passage lacks the phrase "members of the same body" (καὶ σύσσωμοι), which is present in Nestle-Aland's Greek New Testament and in modern English translations. However, this omission may be an error in the manuscript since the next sentence begins with this phrase, and the phrase seems necessary in order for Cyril's argument to make sense.

his flesh—how is it not obvious that we all are one both with one another and with Christ? Christ is the bond of union because he is God and a human being in the same person.[198]

Now concerning the unity in the Spirit, we will follow the same course of investigation and say again that all of us who receive one and the same Spirit (I mean the Holy Spirit) are mixed together, so to speak, with one another and with God. Even though Christ causes the Spirit, who is his own and who is from the Father, to dwell in us who are many individually, nevertheless the Spirit is one and indivisible. He gathers together the spirits of others, who are cut off from unity (I mean in terms of their essence), into unity in his own personal subsistence, making them all one in [737] himself. Just as the power of his holy flesh makes those in whom it dwells one body, in the same way I think that the one Spirit of God, who dwells indivisibly in all, gathers everyone into a spiritual unity. That is why the divinely inspired Paul addressed us, saying, "Bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all."[199] When the one Spirit dwells in us, the one God and Father of all will be in us through his Son, gathering all who participate in the Spirit into unity with one another and with himself. And from the following it will be clear that we are united by participation in the Holy Spirit. Once we have given up our natural lives and conceded victory to the laws of the Spirit, how could anyone doubt that by denying our own life, as it were, and receiving the superworldly likeness of the Spirit who unites us, we are practically transformed to another nature, as it were? We are not only human, but we are called sons of God and heavenly men because we have been made sharers in the divine nature. Therefore, we are all one in the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit (one, I mean, by identical disposition—since I think we ought to remember what was said at the beginning). We are also one by the form of godliness and by communion with the holy flesh of Christ and by communion with the one Holy Spirit, as was just explained.

GLORY TO CHRIST[200] [1]

Chapter Twelve

The Son is by nature one with God his Father, even though he says that he received unity with the Father as a share of grace.

17:22-23 "The glory that you have given me I have given them, so that they may be one, as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become completely one, so that the world may know that you have sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me."

We are quite right to say that the Only Begotten has an essential and natural unity with his Father, since he was begotten with a true begetting and is from him and in him. Though he seems to be separate and distinct from him due to the difference of his own subsistence, yet by the innate identity of his essence he is understood to be one with the Father. But for the sake of the *oikonomia* on our behalf and for our salvation and life, he departed, as it were, from the place he had at the beginning (I mean equality with God the Father). He even seems to be tossed about, so to speak, so that he transgressed his invisible

[198]See footnote 193 above.
[199]Eph 4:2-6.

[200]It may be that Pusey, rather than Cyril, appended this phrase to the end of this section, which coincides with the end of volume 2 in Pusey's text.

glory. That is what "he emptied himself" means.[201] Therefore, he who of old and from the beginning was with the Father receives this glory in the flesh (the earthly and perishable garment of the human form—I mean when it is considered according to its nature), appropriately requesting as a gift what actually belongs to him by nature. **[2]** He was and is, after all, in the form of the Father and equal to him. Now since the flesh from the woman (or the temple that is completely from the virgin) is not of the same substance with God the Father, and neither is it identical in nature, it is considered to be one with him once it is received as the body of the Word. After all, there is one Christ and one Son, even after he becomes human. He is understood to receive unity in this way: he is taken into unity with his flesh included, which does not inherently possess unity with God. And if it is necessary to state this more clearly and succinctly, the Only Begotten says that what was given to his flesh was given to him—given, of course, by the Father through him and in the Spirit. There is only one way union with God can take place, even in the case of Christ (insofar as he appeared as and bears the name of a human being). That way is this: the flesh is sanctified by union with the Spirit in an ineffable manner of concurrence and thus ascends to an unconfused union with God the Word and through him to a union with the Father—a union by disposition, that is, not by nature. This grace and glory that you have given me, Father, he says (namely, the grace and glory of being one with you), "I have given them, so that they may be one, as we are one."

We are united with one another in the way that was just explained, and we are united with God. And the Lord has given us a crystal-clear explanation of how or in what way this takes place. He lays out the glorious benefit of his teaching as follows. He says, "I in them and you in me, that they may become completely one." The Son is in us corporeally as a human being, comingled and united with us through the mystical blessing,[202] but spiritually as God, re-creating our spirit to newness of life by the activity and grace of his Spirit and making us sharers in his divine nature. Christ, then, is clearly the bond of our unity **[3]** with God the Father, uniting us to himself since he is a human being, and to God his Father since he is God by nature. It was not possible for the nature that is subject to decay to rise up to incorruption unless the nature that is superior to all decay and change came down to it and somehow lifted up to its own good attribute that which always falls. By communion and mixing with itself, it practically pulled it outside the limits of what is proper to originate nature and refashioned to itself that which was not that way of itself. We have been brought into complete unity, then, with God the Father through Christ the mediator. We who have received in ourselves both corporeally and spiritually him who is true Son by nature and who has an essential union with the Father, as I just said, have been glorified by becoming participants and sharers in the nature that is above all.

Christ wants us to be received into union with God the Father, and at the same time he bestows the benefits from the Father on our nature through himself. He says that the power of his grace will be a clear refutation, as it were, of those who think that he is not from God. What grounds will remain for this false accusation if he, through himself, raises to unity with the Father those who belong to him (namely, by faith and sincere love)? Indeed, Father, when they gain unity with you through me, then the world will "know that you have sent me," that is, by your good pleasure I have come to help the earth and to accomplish salvation for those who err in it. In addition, he

[201] Phil 2:7.

[202] I.e., the Eucharist.

says, those who have become participants in such a thrice-longed-for grace will know just as much that you "have loved them even as you have loved me." Surely he who received into union him who was like **[4]** us and from us (that is, Christ) and considered him worthy of such great love (we are once again speaking of Christ as a human being), and gave us the ability to attain this blessing—how could he not speak of his love in the same way? No one who is intelligent should be disturbed by this. It is clear and beyond question that what is servile will never overcome its master in any way, and God the Father will not love his Son in the same measure as he loves creatures. However, we must consider this: we see him who was beloved for ages now starting to be loved when he became human. Therefore, he had this by receiving it, but he certainly did not receive it for himself. Rather we shall find that he received it for us. When he came to life, after all, destroying the power of death, he did not accomplish the resurrection for himself, insofar as he is Word and God, but he granted this to us through and in himself (since the entire human nature was in Christ, trampling on the chains of death). In the same way he should be understood to receive the Father's love not for himself (since he was always and forever loved), but he received this love from the Father when he became human in order to bestow the Father's love on us. Therefore, just as we will be conformed to his resurrection and glory, and in fact we already are, as this comes about first in Christ, the first fruits of our race; so also we have conformity, as it were, to his love as we yield the victory to the Only Begotten in all things and justly marvel at the incomparable mercy of the divine nature toward us, which graces those whom he has made with what belongs to him and shares with his creatures what belongs to himself alone. **[5]**

17:24 "Father, I desire that those also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory, which you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world."

After praying for his disciples, or rather for all who would come to him by faith, and after asking the Father for unity and love and sanctification, he immediately adds these words. In so doing he shows that being with him and being counted worthy to see his glory belong to no one but those who have already been united to the Father through him and have obtained his love, which we know that he himself has from his Father. We are loved as sons in the likeness of him who is truly Son by nature. Even though we are not loved to the same degree, nevertheless the exact representation of that love, since it truly coincides with that love, displays his glory. "I desire, Father," he says, that those who have become mine by way of faith and illumination from you may be with me and see my glory. What language could reveal to us how great a blessing it is to be with Christ? We will have unspeakable joy. No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived "what God has prepared for those who love him."[203] What perfection of invincible joy could they lack whose inheritance is to be with Christ, the Lord of all? Indeed, the wise and holy Paul seems to have considered the prospect to be worthy of all wonder. It is better, he says, "to depart and be with Christ."[204] He who preferred this great and admirable condition to the honors of this life—how could his witness not be true when he indicates that for those who genuinely belong to him, great is the gift of being with him **[6]** who richly gives every blessing to all? The word that he has addressed to us will help support our point just as well. With Christ speaking in him[205] and revealing the "power of

[203] 1 Cor 2:9.
[204] Phil 1:23.
[205] 2 Cor 13:3.

the age to come,"[206] he said: the dead will rise, but "we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up in the clouds together with them to meet the Lord in the air; and so we will be with the Lord forever."[207] And our Lord Jesus Christ himself has explicitly promised to grace us with the same thing when he said, "I go and prepare a place for you, and I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also."[208]

If we do not think very carefully about the subject we will carelessly assume that this refers to the mansions above. But if we pursue another line of reasoning we will conclude that the same place is given to us and to Christ, that is, similar honor of the same kind, according to our likeness to him. For we will be conformed to his glory[209] and we will reign with him,[210] according to the Holy Scriptures. And he promises that, in a way that he knows, he will recline with us in the kingdom of heaven.[211]

Leaving for the moment any further proof that we will be with Christ and participate in his glory and share in his kingdom, since that is beyond dispute, let us proceed to the other point, that is, the words *to see my glory*. Now the sight of Christ's glory will not be given to the profane or sinners, and neither to those who dishonor the divine law, but only to the holy and good. We know this because the prophet says, "Let the ungodly be taken away that they may not see the glory of the Lord."[212] And in his preaching in the Gospels, Christ the Savior says, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for [7] they will see God."[213] Furthermore, those who have a pure heart would surely be none other than those who, by their union with God through the Son in the Spirit, have abandoned all love of the flesh and have driven worldly pleasure as far away as possible, who have denied their own lives, as it were, and have offered themselves only to the will of the Spirit, living a pure life completely devoted to Christ. Paul was such a person, who in his utter purity did not fear to say, "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me."[214] I also hear another of the saints singing and saying, "Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew the right Spirit within me. Do not cast me away from your presence, and do not take your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and establish me with your governing Spirit."[215] He calls the Spirit the "joy of salvation," since the Spirit bestows unending and eternal joy and gives guidance in the sufferings of this world. He is truly the Spirit of salvation, that is, of Christ. Giving the Spirit many names, he mentions a "pure heart" and calls him a "right Spirit." Those who are not yet united to God and do not yet participate in the blessing of Christ through the Spirit do not have a right heart but a crooked and perverted one, as the psalmist says.[216]

To summarize, then, the Savior wanted an excellent grace to be given to those who were genuinely his: the grace of being with him and seeing his glory. He says that he was loved "before the foundation of the world," showing quite clearly in these words that the great mystery concerning him is most ancient [8] and that the way of our salvation, which was accomplished by Christ our mediator, was foreknown by God the Father. That knowledge was not given to those on earth in the beginning, but the law intervened, which was our schoolmaster in the godly way of life. It fashioned in us a dim knowledge through

[206]Heb 6:5.
[207]1 Thess 4:16-17.
[208]Jn 14:3.
[209]Phil 3:21.
[210]2 Tim 2:12.
[211]Mt 26:29; Rev 3:20.
[212]Is 26:10.
[213]Mt 5:8.
[214]Gal 2:19-20.
[215]Ps 51:10-12 (Ps 50:12-14 LXX).
[216]Ps 101:4 (Ps 100:4 LXX).

types, while God the Father reserved the grace of the Savior for the proper time. The knowledge of these matters clearly helps us to dispose of the scorn of the Jews and the unholy insolence of the Israelites, who always advocate for the law, even when they ought to place no value on the types, since the truth is present. It is also very useful for refuting others who think that the will of the Father contrived the great mystery as an afterthought. That is why Paul too swept away the thinking of those who were so disposed when he said of Christ that he was foreknown "before the foundation of the world"[217] but was revealed at the end of the ages.

We must also note that he says that the Father has given the disciples to him along with God-befitting glory and almighty power, not insofar as the Lord of glory is considered as God by nature, having royal dignity essentially, but insofar as he appeared as a human being, for whom all things are gifts from God and not from his own nature. After all, creation has all its possessions from God. It has nothing at all in itself, though it appears to possess things that are good.

17:25 "Righteous Father, the world does not know you, but I know you; and these know that you have sent me."

Here he calls the Father "righteous," even though there are other names he could call him. For example, he is holy, pure, undefiled, maker and creator, and whatever else would be proper to the **[9]** nature of the king of all. If we want to learn, then, we should investigate the reason why Christ calls him righteous, even though there are other names he could have used. It will bring us much profit if we do not allow the meaning of the divinely inspired Scriptures to escape us. So after examining the meaning of the passage, we explain it as follows: When Christ willed that we be sanctified according to the good pleasure of his Father, he fulfilled the role of Paraclete and mediator and interceded for all of us by saying, "Holy Father, protect them by your truth."[218] Truth, in his statement, is none other than his own Spirit, through whom he protects our souls, sealing us in his likeness and fortifying us, as it were, with invincible courage. He exhorts us to pursue pure, good works with unrestrained zeal so that nothing stands in our way or has the power to call us back as we take the most direct course to do what pleases God and pay no attention to the devil's various schemes and the pleasures of the world. Once we have been sealed by the Holy Spirit and have the pledge of grace in our mind, our hearts are protected in that we have been "clothed with power from on high."[219] Christ asked for the Father to grant us sanctification so that we might enjoy such desirable blessings. I, at least, think that he seems to have something like this in mind since, besides what he said concerning our need for sanctification from the Father, he added the following concerning us: "The glory that you have given me I have given them, so that they may be one, as we are one, for you have loved them even as you have loved me."[220] And again, "Father, I desire that those also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am."[221]

[10] After saying these things he immediately calls the Father "righteous," and for good reason. It was by his will and good pleasure that the Son became human in order to bestow on human nature, which was "created for good works,"[222] sanctification through the Spirit and union with God and habitation in the mansions above, there to be with him and reign with him. God did not create humanity

[217]1 Pet 1:20.

[218]Jn 17:17.
[219]Lk 24:49.
[220]Jn 17:22-23.
[221]Jn 17:24.
[222]Eph 1:10.

in the beginning for evil. Human nature was turned aside to wickedness by the unholy machinations of the devil and led astray from that original divine guidance, as if uprooted from its foundation. Truly it was especially fitting for the righteous Father to lift up what had been cast down by the devil's malice, and to restore to its original position what had been dragged off to where it should not be, and to free it from the foulness of sin and transform it to its original image, as it was created in the beginning. It was also fitting for him to subject him who crushed the image and irreverently dared to ruin it, that is, Satan, to fitting punishment, though I think any form of chastisement is minor for him who displays such madness against God. "Righteous Father," he says, "You are righteous and good, and your judgment is right."[223] You have sent me, your true and genuine Son, into the world to help it and renew it. But, "Oh the ignorance!" he says. "The world did not know" that you were like this. They should have immediately recognized your loving kindness and your merciful will and should have hastened to their Savior and offered you their willing worship.

Christ, then, spoke this way to the Father, giving thanks, as it were, for us and on our behalf, that in his righteousness he had granted salvation to those who suffered the devil's violence and had condemned the devil to destruction. And the **[11]** "world," he says, that is, those who oppose the preaching of the divine gospel because of their worldly thoughts, does not realize that the Father is righteous. "For the god of this world has blinded the mind of the unbelievers," as Paul says, "to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ."[224] As for his own disciples, however, he testifies that they know and understand him, thereby bestowing on them a glorious and enviable dignity. He raises them above all worldly humiliation and paltriness because they know the Father, and so they surely also confess that Christ is the Son. When he charges the world with not knowing the Father, that is, the one who is true God by nature, and at the same time he testifies that the disciples do know him, how is it not beyond all question that they are no longer of the world, but they have come to belong to Christ, who is above the world? As Paul says, "Through him the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world,"[225] and again concerning us, "Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires."[226] We maintain that the disciples are outside the world, not in terms of the location of their bodies (since they shine "like stars in the world, holding fast to the word of life")[227] but because even as they walk on earth, their citizenship is in heaven. They bade farewell to the desires of the flesh, or rather they lifted their mind above all worldly desire. They ascended to a surpassing and highly exalted virtue, as the passage in the Psalms says, "God's mighty ones of the earth have been greatly exalted."[228] Those who are courageous because of God have put aside the groveling thoughts of the earth and have set their mind above. That is what I think "exalted" means. Therefore, he says, the world did not know that you are righteous, Father. But I know, because I am your will and wisdom. **[12]** However, I paid no attention to my innate glory and God-befitting honor, but I emptied myself and descended into human poverty so that I might save, in accordance with your good pleasure, the race that had fallen away from its relationship to us. Though the world did not know this, the disciples were rich with this knowledge. They truly understood that "you have sent me," that

[223]Ps 119:137 (Ps 118:137 LXX).
[224]2 Cor 4:4.
[225]Gal 6:14.
[226]Gal 5:24.
[227]Phil 2:15-16.
[228]Ps 47:9 (Ps 46:10 LXX).

is, I have come by your will to bring about a positive result by saving the world, which was in danger.

17:26 "I made your name known to them, and I will make it known, so that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them."

He is saying that he knows God the Father, and so do the disciples who follow him. And lest anyone should be carried off into bizarre and deceptive ideas and think that Christ has knowledge in the same way as the disciples, he immediately makes a distinction and establishes a clear difference. He immediately shows that he *reveals*, while they *receive*, knowledge from him. Our Lord Jesus Christ, since he is the Word and counsel and wisdom of the Father, knows what is in him without being taught and concerns himself with the deep things of his Father, just as the human mind knows what is in a person and our intellect within us is clearly ignorant of nothing in us. The divinely inspired disciples do not have the ability to know about the Father as a fruit of their own intellect, but they are enlightened by the Spirit, and in this way they devote themselves to an accurate understanding of the mystery of the Son, and so they are able to understand the Father as well. Beneficially, then, and for good reason Christ added, "I made your name known to them, and I will make it known."

Notice how both of them (I mean the Father and the Son) accomplish the same activity of making the vision of God comprehensible. **[13]** The Father makes us wise by revealing his own Son, and the Son no less makes us wise by revealing the Father. For example, he says to the blessed Peter in the region of Caesarea called Philippi, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father in heaven."[229] That is because the disciple had confessed and affirmed that he believed that he was "the Christ, the Son of the living God."[230] But here he says of himself, "I made your name known to them, and I will make it known." The Only Begotten did not stop revealing to us the meaning of the mystery concerning himself after he revealed it to the first disciples in the beginning. He does this continually, implanting in each person the illumination of the Spirit and leading those who love him to knowledge that transcends mind and reason. What benefit does he say that he confers on us when he says that he has already revealed the Father to the disciples and he will reveal him to those who come after them? He indicates this when he says, "so that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them." Those who are enabled to know God the Father by pure contemplation and who are accurately taught the meaning of the mystery of Christ will surely and without a doubt have the perfect love of the Father, just as the Son does. The Father loves his own Son with a perfect love, and Christ himself dwells in those who know him (through the Holy Spirit) and unites them in a spiritual kinship with God the Father through himself, as they are pregnant with an unperverted knowledge of God. He made known to us the Father's name when he revealed himself to us as Son. After all, the knowledge of the begetter will surely come hand in hand with the knowledge of the offspring, and the reverse is true as well.

[14] Now if the statement is true and must be accepted without question that the concept of Son implies the Father,[231] and the concept of Father in turn implies the Son—and the knowledge of each one leads to the knowledge of both—how can the Son still be a creature as some unholy people say? If any should mention

[229]Mt 16:17.
[230]Mt 16:16.
[231]I.e., you cannot be a father unless you have a son, and vice versa.

the Son, they have introduced the knowledge of the Father to their hearers; but if they refer to a creature, they imply the knowledge of its creator. Since the Son calls God his Father, not his maker or creator, he clearly knows himself to be a true offspring. Therefore, the Son is understood to be and in fact is a son, not a creature as they say. If he were a creature, then the one who made him would be a creator, not a Father. The fact that the classification of offspring or the name of sonship applies to us as well will not lessen the cogency of our argument. The attributes that are ascribed and apply properly and in the strict sense to him who is Son by nature are brought down to us, since on occasion the Holy Scripture often applies the qualities of a natural son to those who are sons by adoption. And it is not surprising that if we have obtained the name of offspring, God in his loving kindness wants to honor us, since he even used the name *gods* to describe those who are admittedly of the earth.

18:1-2 After Jesus had spoken these words, he went out with his disciples across the Kidron valley to a place where there was a garden, which he and his disciples entered. Now Judas, who betrayed him, also knew the place, because Jesus often met there with his disciples.

He has now enlightened his disciples and directed them with fitting words to those things that lead to virtue and urged them to choose a way of life that is truly beautiful and pleasing to God. In addition he has promised to fill them with spiritual graces and to send down blessing upon them from the Father above. [**15**] Now he departs readily, not shrinking back from the time of his suffering or fearing to die for all. What was the likelihood that he would do such a thing when it was time for him to suffer to purchase impassibility for all, when he came for this purpose alone, that by his blood he might reconcile the whole earth to God? Often when the Jews chose to rage against him and tried to stone him in their madness, he escaped by his divine power and made himself invisible, easily eluding the clutches of those who were after him. He was not willing to suffer then, since it was not yet the right time for him to suffer. But since the time had now come, he left the house in which he had instructed the disciples in the mysteries and went to the place where Christ the Savior of all often spent time with his disciples. He also did this to make it easy for the traitor to find him. The place was a "garden," fulfilling the type of the original paradise. It was a recapitulation, as it were, of places and a return, so to speak, of all things to their original condition. In paradise the beginning of our suffering occurred, and in the garden the suffering of Christ received its beginning, which brought about a restoration from all that happened to us long ago.

18:3 So Judas brought a detachment of soldiers together with officers from the chief priests and the Pharisees, and they came there with lanterns and torches and weapons.

The divinely inspired Evangelist very appropriately says that Jesus was in the garden not with a multitude or crowd of other men gathering there or contemplating coming to his aid [**16**] but only with his disciples, so that he may lay bare the foul thinking in the heart of the traitor. The conscience is able to produce trouble in each of us and stir up terrible fear when we are attempting to do something unholy. I think the traitor experienced something like this when he brought the detachment of soldiers armed with weapons together with the officers of the Jews as though to arrest a notorious malefactor. Judas probably knew that he could never take Jesus if he did not choose to suffer and go to his suffering of

his own free will. But the unholiness of his actions twisted his mind and he was drunk, as it were, with his excessive audacity so that he did not see where he was being carried or perceive that he was attempting the impossible. He thought that by the multitude of his followers and by human strength he could prevail over Christ's divine power. And do not marvel that the wretch thinks such things and is found to hold such ridiculous ideas. When he handed the rudder of his soul to another and sold the power of his own will to the devil, he was completely possessed by the devil's madness. Once the devil entered him, he lurked inside him like a poisonous snake. One could rightly marvel, however, at the traitor's fall and say that it is worthy of ceaseless tears. He who had just dined with Christ and shared his bread and partook in his holy table, who had received along with the others the words exhorting to godliness, who had heard him say explicitly, "One of you will betray me,"[232] leaped up from his seat at their table, so to speak, and immediately after reclining with him ran straight to the Jews to earn his reward. He had no desire to remember the words that exhorted him to godliness, and neither did he entertain the hope of future glory, but he despised the honor [**17**] that had been given to him. In short he preferred a paltry sum of money to all eternal blessings put together, and he himself became the devil's net and snare for Christ and the prime mover and fellow worker with the godlessness of the Jews.

The following fact too seems utterly ridiculous to me. The crowd that accompanied the traitor when they made their attack upon Christ carried lanterns and torches. I suppose they were probably trying to avoid stumbling in the dark or inadvertently falling into pits. Such accidents are likely to happen in the dark. But oh the madness! Those wretches in their great ignorance do not see that they are stumbling against the stone of which God the Father says, "See, I am laying in Zion a stone that will make people stumble, a rock that will make them fall."[233] They who on occasion shrink back from a small pit do not realize that they are leaping into the depths of the abyss and lowest regions of the earth. And they who are cautious about the twilight of the evening show no concern for eternal and endless night. Those who irreverently plotted against the divine light, that is, Christ, were about to "walk in darkness" and the dead of night, as the prophet says.[234] Not only that but they will also go into the outer darkness itself, there to give account of their ungodly behavior toward Christ and to be delivered to a bitter and unending punishment.

18:4-6 Then Jesus, knowing all that was to happen to him, came forward and asked them, "Whom are you looking for?" They answered, "Jesus of Nazareth." Jesus replied, "I am he." Judas, who betrayed him, was standing with them. When Jesus said to them, "I am he," they stepped back and fell to the ground.

During the night the traitor arrived with the officers of the Jews together with [**18**] a detachment of soldiers. As we just said, he thought that he was going to take him against his will, confident in the great number of his followers. He finds him in his usual place since the day had not yet dawned to allow him to go elsewhere, but the night was still detaining the Lord, as it were, where he slept. Christ, then, in order to prove that Judas was mistaken in his view that Christ was just like anyone else, anticipates his approach and eagerly goes out to meet them, thereby showing that he knew their audacious plan full well and that though it would have been

[232]Jn 13:21.

[233]Rom 9:33.
[234]Is 59:9.

easy for him in his foreknowledge to slip away and escape, he went to his suffering by his own choice. He did not fall into danger against his will by the violence of others. That way the wise among the Greeks cannot ridicule him and in their levity turn his cross into a stumbling block and an accusation,[235] nor can the Jew who killed the Lord exalt himself over Christ, thinking that he overpowered him against his will. He inquires of those who came to arrest him whom they have come in search of, not because he did not know—how could that be?—but in order to prove by his inquiry that those who were right there looking at him could not even recognize the one they were after, thereby confirming us in the correct understanding that he could never have been arrested if he had not willingly approached those who were looking for him. Notice how when he directly asked them, "Whom are you looking for?" they did not immediately reply, "We are here to arrest you who are speaking to us." Rather, as if they are talking about someone not yet present or visible, they say, "Jesus of Nazareth."

Now some may well say to this, Maybe the soldier did not know Jesus and maybe the officers of the Jews shared his ignorance. We reply that it is not reasonable for someone to make such a claim. How could those who were selected for the priesthood fail to know him who was always under their power **[19]** as he taught "day after day in the temple," as the Savior himself says?[236] So that no one may trust in such arguments and engage in reasoning that is outside the bounds of propriety, the divinely inspired Evangelist in his foresight fittingly added that along with the soldiers and the officers, "Judas, who betrayed him, was standing" there. How could the traitor not know who the Lord was? Well, you might respond, it was night and dark, and it was not easy to see the one they were looking for. How, then, is the author of the book not worthy of our admiration since even such a small detail as this has not escaped his attention? He tells us that they came into the garden carrying lamps and torches. The divine dignity of Christ shows forth, then, in the solution to this curious situation in that he presents himself to those who are looking for him when they are not yet able to recognize him. In order to prove that they were in this condition (I mean they were unable to recognize him), he says clearly, "I am he." Furthermore, in order to prove that their great number is useless and that all human power is nothing compared to the ineffable divine power, he politely addresses them with a gentle statement and in so doing throws the entire crowd of those who were looking for him to the ground. Thereby they may learn that if the nature of originate beings cannot withstand even one word of God, and that spoken in kindness, how could it bear his threats? As the psalmist says, "You are fearful; who can withstand your wrath?"[237] That which happened to a portion, to those who came to arrest him, may be taken as a sign, as it were, of the fall of the entire race. The prophet Jeremiah, for example, laments for the Jews, saying, "The house of Israel has fallen, and there is no one to raise it."[238] What happened here is an image of what inevitably happens. It teaches that everyone who practices iniquity against Christ will utterly and in every way fall. **[20]**

18:7-9 Again he asked them, "Whom are you looking for?" And they said, "Jesus of Nazareth." Jesus answered, "I told you that I am he. So if you are looking for me, let these men go." This was to fulfill the word that he had spoken, "I did not lose a single one of those whom you gave me."

[235]Cf. 1 Cor 1:23.
[236]Mt 26:55.
[237]Ps 76:7 (Ps 75:8 LXX).
[238]Amos 5:1-2.

He asks a second time with a set purpose, to show how hard their minds were. They were bereft, as it were, of mental acuity, and their minds were deranged because of their ungodliness, so they addressed him without realizing that he was the one they were looking for. But Christ by his actions proves to us that what he said was true: "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep."[239] Christ shields the apostles and puts himself in danger by his own choice when he goes out to those who had come to take him away to his passion, who were sent by the chief priests and Pharisees. When he asked them whom they came to take away to bind in the bonds of death, and they answered, "Jesus of Nazareth," he pointed himself out, practically accusing them of delaying, and he commanded them to let the others go. That is because it was necessary for one to die for all who is worth the life of all, "that he might be Lord of both the dead and the living."[240]

It is also completely incredible to think, as some do, that the death of the holy apostles resulted in the destruction of death and decay when they themselves for good reason should be numbered among those who have been freed from death and decay. They have a nature like ours, over which the power of death holds sway. It was necessary, then, in the first place that only he who was from the living Father should hand over his body to death as a ransom for the life of all, **[21]** so that his body, connected to the life of the Word who is united to it, might open the way for corporeal nature to be able to triumph over the bonds of death. For the Lord is the "first fruits of those who have fallen asleep"[241] and the firstborn from the dead, who by his own resurrection makes it easy for those who come after him to return to incorruption. He therefore removes the disciples from the danger of the moment, knowing that the contest is now his and showing that our restoration is the work of none other than that essence that reigns over all things.

The wise Evangelist then holds up the specific and personal care that he showed to those who were with him then as clear proof of the general and universal mercy, so to speak, that will be shown to those who come to him by faith. He commanded them to let the disciples go, says the Evangelist, "to fulfill the word that he had spoken, 'I did not lose a single one of those whom you gave me.'" How can there be any doubt, then, that he will spare those who come after them? Where there is no neglect in small matters, how could there be neglect in greater matters? If he showed such mercy to a handful, how could it not be reasonable for him to show mercy to a multitude? The number of believers, after all, is very large. You should take the specific, then, as an image of the general. By the fact that he does not want to put those who genuinely belong to him in any danger at all, you can easily perceive what kind and how great his wrath will be against his murderers. How could he not hate what is against his will? How can there be any doubt that severe and endless punishment awaits those who do what he hates? **[22]**

18:10 Then Simon Peter, who had a sword, drew it, struck the high priest's slave and cut off his right ear. The slave's name was Malchus.

What was it that compelled the divinely inspired Evangelist, someone might ask, to mention this and to show us the disciple using a sword, contrary to his own custom, against those who came to arrest Christ, as he was stirred up to a wrath that was more intense and harsh than is fitting, for which Christ rebuked him? Perhaps the explanation of this will seem superfluous to some, but it

[239]Jn 10:11.
[240]Rom 14:9.
[241]1 Cor 15:20.

is not. He has introduced this as an example for us, not for some chance benefit. By what has happened here we may learn how far the zeal of our devotion to Christ may proceed without blame and what we may choose to do in conflicts like this without stumbling on what is displeasing to God. This event serves as a type that forbids us to draw a sword out of devotion to Christ or to pick up stones against anyone or to strike our opponents with a stick. For "our weapons are not fleshly," as Paul says.[242] We should treat even our murderers with gentleness when circumstances preclude our escape. It is far better for others to be corrected for their sins against us by him who judges justly than for us to make excuses for our blood guilt by citing our piety as a pretext. Besides, it would be bizarre for us to use the death of our persecutors to honor him who cheerfully chose to suffer death in order to destroy it. In this we must follow Christ himself.[243] If he were summoned to death by force and compulsion, unable to overcome the invincible assault because of the number **[23]** of the officers, it would perhaps not have been unreasonable for those who chose to love him to come to his aid with all their might and engage in every bold act in order to rescue him from the danger imposed against his will by the godlessness of others. But since he is true God, able to wipe out his adversaries even at the very beginning of the conflict, when he gave them a taste of such power that he laid them on the ground with a single gentle word (since they all fell backward), how could it be right for us, in unbridled and uncontrolled wrath, to proceed willfully and recklessly to lengths that he did not, even though he was able to do so easily? We also find this sort of thing written elsewhere by the holy Evangelists. Once the Lord came to a village bordering on Judea to lodge there. It belonged to the Samaritans. But as he was approaching they brusquely turned him away. The disciples were enraged at this. They came to him and said, "Lord, do you want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them?"[244] The Savior replied to them, Leave them alone. Do you not know that "I can appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me twelve legions of angels?"[245] He did not come as God to use his own natural power against those who raged against him but to teach us the utmost forbearance and present himself as a type of perfect tranquility. That is why he said, "Learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart."[246]

Now Peter's intent in drawing his sword was not contrary to the commandment of the law. The law commanded us to pay back evildoers without blame—foot for foot, hand for hand, wound for wound, stripe for stripe.[247] Why else did they come armed with swords **[24]** and clubs, equipped with armor and banded together in great numbers, except to commit acts that would likely put the disciples in the most extreme danger? After all, the Savior established clearly for us that they brought clubs and swords when he said to them somewhere else, "Have you come out with swords and clubs to arrest me as though I were a bandit? Day after day I sat in the temple teaching, and you did not arrest me."[248] Peter's action, then, was lawful and did not contradict the ancient decrees. Our Lord Jesus Christ, however, since he came to introduce teachings superior to the law and to transform us into his own meekness, rebukes the actions that are in accordance with the law for not accomplishing what is truly good. The perfect good is

[242] 2 Cor 10:4.

[243] The murder of Hypatia illustrates that the kind of violence Cyril is warning against here is not hypothetical. See p. xvi.

[244] Lk 9:54.

[245] Mt 26:53.

[246] Mt 11:29.

[247] Ex 21:24-25.

[248] Mt 26:55.

found not in repaying in kind but in the utmost forbearance.

Some may perhaps wonder at this and ask themselves, Why did Peter have a sword? We will reply that the necessity of defending against those who choose to do evil, in accordance with the law, entails the necessity of carrying a sword. Otherwise, if someone should choose to strike the innocent with a sword, how could that person undergo the equivalent experience? Besides, it is likely that since the holy disciples were hurrying from the place of their rest in the middle of the night, expecting to come upon woods and gardens, they were wary of the attacks of wild animals, since the land of Judea was especially fertile when it comes to animals. To this you may reply, Why did the disciples need a sword? Was not Christ sufficient for those in danger so that he could scare away the wild animals and deliver them from their fear on this account? Yes indeed, we answer, this is well said. Christ can do anything. But we will find that though Christ could have brought it about otherwise, the disciples still lived in the same way we do. **[25]** Shall we not grant that Christ can turn stones into bread and create money out of nothing to meet their expenses? Yet they still brought bread and carried a purse, collecting money from those who offered it. And when Christ wanted to cross the sea with them, he got into a boat, even though he could have walked on the very waves if he had wanted to do so. It is therefore futile to denounce the disciples when one sees them engaged in ordinary human activities.

Then Peter "cuts off the right ear" of the slave. This action serves as a type to indicate that the Jewish people were bereft of right hearing, as it were, since they did not want to gather around Christ's teachings. Instead they honored the left ear. Convinced by their own madness, "deceiving and being deceived," as it is written[249] (since they trampled on the law decreed of old), they turned to "human precepts as doctrines."[250]

18:11 Jesus said to Peter, "Put your sword back into its sheath. Am I not to drink the cup that the Father has given me?"

Christ's words usher in a precept and a commandment of the gospel way of life—not that spoken by Moses according to the law to the ancients but that decreed by Christ, which so forbids us to use swords (or rather to offer any resistance) that even if someone wanted to strike us on one cheek and demand that we turn the other to them as well, it tells us to allow it and thus to excise all human faintheartedness from our souls, as it were. But even if no law had been decreed by me concerning the necessity of forbearance, he says, **[26]** your mind, Peter, has fallen short of right reasoning, and you have made an attempt that is completely dissonant with the nature of the occasion. When it is the decree and pleasure of God the Father that I drink this cup, that is, that I willingly undergo the deep sleep of death, so to speak, in order to destroy death and decay, how can I shrink from it when such great blessings are sure to come to the human race from my drinking it? These words provide a good explanation of this passage.

The following passage has the same meaning. Our Lord Jesus Christ wanted to strengthen his disciples in their faith and remove in advance the stumbling block of his precious cross. So he said to them while they were resting, "See, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be betrayed into the hands of sinners, and they will crucify him and kill him, and on the third day he will be raised."[251] The divinely inspired Peter, not considering the blessing that would come from his suffering but looking only at the ignominy

[249] 2 Tim 3:13.

[250] Mt 15:9.

[251] Mt 20:18; 26:45; 27:23.

of his suffering, said, "God forbid it, Lord! This must never happen to you."[252] And what did Christ say to this? "Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; for you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things."[253] Those who want to set their mind on what pleases God make it their aim and endeavor to disregard the honors of the world and to think nothing of the loss of reputation in the eyes of others so long as they can bring about some benefit for others by enduring it. Love, he says, "seeks not its own."[254] But those who are turned toward and focused only on human affairs consider the loss of earthly glories to be intolerable. They look only to their own benefit and have no sympathy for the losses of their neighbor. In that passage Peter was called a stumbling block to Christ—even though **[27]** Christ cannot stumble—since he spoke out of a love that is somewhat culpable because he was looking only at the suffering of the cross and not at the benefits of the suffering. (He tried to prevent what God decreed and determined should happen for the life of all.)

In the same way we also see him doing the same thing here with his zeal and his passionate attempt with the sword. But again he is rebuked not only with the words, "Put your sword back into its sheath," but, as another of the Evangelists reported, Christ added, "For all who take the sword will perish by the sword."[255] What we said before we will say again: he did not go to his suffering against his will, and neither was he brought to it by the violence of the Jews. So how could it be right to thwart or restrain in any way (especially with a sword) the audacity of their combined attack and the unholy schemes of the Jews? He says that God the Father has given him the "cup," that is, death, even though it was prepared by the godlessness of the Jews. That is because it would not have happened at all if he had not allowed it to happen for our sakes. That is also why Christ said to boasting Pilate, "You would have no power over me unless it had been given you from above."[256] When he speaks of Pilate being given power, he is referring to the Son's voluntary decision to suffer and the consent of the Father from above.

18:12-14 So the soldiers, the chief captain and the officers of the Jews arrested Jesus and bound him. First they took him to Annas, who was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, the high priest that year. Caiaphas was the one who had advised the Jews that it was better to have one person die for the people.

Now that all obstacles have been overcome **[28]** and Peter has put away his sword and Christ has surrendered himself, as it were, into the hands of the Jews—even though he could have escaped easily and avoided suffering—the soldiers together with their leader and the officers are carried away by savage anger and inflamed with invincible overconfidence, as it were. They arrest the Lord, who submits to whatever they want, and bind him with fetters, even though he came to us to free us from the devil's fetters and deliver us from the snare of sin. They bring him to Annas, who is the father-in-law of Caiaphas. From this we may conclude that he was the architect and planner of the unholy assault on Christ and that the traitor, when he received his hire, likely obtained from him the band with which to arrest Christ. So Christ was taken to him first. The Jews wanted to show us by their actions that the words ascribed to them by the prophet are true and now coming about: "Let us bind the righteous man, for he is useless to us."[257]

[252]Mt 16:22.
[253]Mt 16:23.
[254]1 Cor 13:5.
[255]Mt 26:52.
[256]Jn 19:11.
[257]Is 3:10 (LXX).

Indeed, Christ was useless to the Jews, not because of his qualities but because they had a disposition devoted to sin and pleasure. He seemed to them to advocate impiety when he introduced a righteousness above the law and inculcated an understanding without any concealment of what truly pleases the virtue-loving God. The law does not have such a way, but in shadows and enigmas it indirectly indicates what is beneficial to the hearers. Just as sunlight is no use to people whose sight is damaged and brings no benefit to them because the disease prevents it; and just as people in bad health think that healthy food is the most useless food of all, even though it can bestow **[29]** the health they long for; so also the Lord seems useless to the Jews, even though he is the prince of salvation. That is because they do not have the desire to be saved.

They sent him bound to Caiaphas, the high priest. "Caiaphas was the one who had advised the Jews that it was better to have one person die for the people." The sacred and holy victim, that is, Christ, was hunted down by the machinations of Annas and the service of his hirelings. Ensnared in the net, he was brought to the leader and instigator of the unjust slaughter. This was Caiaphas, who was adorned with the grace of the priesthood. His advice clearly puts the murder in motion and convicts him of being the initiator of the audacious deed. He receives Jesus bound and, as the fruit of his plans and unholy designs, the miserable man commits the most unholy of all evil acts. What could be more grievous than profaning Christ?

18:15 Simon Peter and another disciple followed Jesus.

It seems that the other disciples were panic-stricken and fled from the present wrath of the murderers, but Peter stands out because of his love for Christ. He is always driven by fervent emotions, and he risks his life to follow him and to see the outcome of the events. The other disciple goes with him and rises to the same disposition with equal courage. The other disciple was John, the author of this divine work, who was truly devoted to God. He calls himself the other disciple. He does not explicitly name himself so as to avoid the suggestion of boasting and to banish from his mind the thought that he is better than the others. **[30]** Even though outstanding qualities of virtue are clearly possessed by some of those who think rightly, those qualities should not proceed from their tongues to the ears of others. It is utterly unseemly for someone to be praised not by others but by one's own mouth. For example, the writer of Proverbs says, "Let another praise you, and not your own mouth—a stranger, and not your own lips."[258]

Since that disciple was known to the high priest, he went with Jesus into the courtyard of the high priest.

The disciple shows great forethought in mentioning this, and he does not refrain from giving a very small detail for the benefit of all. Since he was about to set down in his book what was done and said in the "courtyard of the high priest," he needed, as it were, to give an explanation of how he was able to enter. So he says that he was "known to the high priest." He enters, then, without hindrance because his "knowledge" of the leader—for he did not think it proper to say "friendship"—makes it possible for him to go in without any obstacles. He gives us this most useful explanation of his acquaintance so that we may believe what he records happening in the courtyard, since he records it not as one who is taught by the reports of others but as one who himself has seen and heard what took place.

18:16 But Peter was standing outside at the gate. So the other disciple, who was known

[258]Prov 27:2.

to the high priest, went out, spoke to the woman who guarded the gate and brought Peter in.

Peter would not have stayed back, as passionate as his soul is, if the vigilance of the servant at the gate [**31**] had not made the entrance dangerous for those she did not already know. Of course it would not have been difficult for a man to push a woman aside, but then he could have been charged with disorderly conduct. The disciple, therefore, despite his great distress, was compelled to wait outside until the other, recognizing the immeasurable grief this caused him, brought him in with him. The other disciple spoke to the woman who guarded the gates and asked as a favor to bring in his eager companion.

18:17 The woman at the gate said to Peter, "You are not also one of this man's disciples, are you?" He said, "I am not."

Christ our Savior had already predicted to Peter that he would deny him three times and that before the cock crowed his faith would fail. Therefore, the divinely inspired Evangelist explains point by point where and how the matter was fulfilled. The woman seated at the gates inquires of him whether he is one of the disciples of him who was undergoing the unjust trial. Peter denies it and counters it as if it were an accusation, saying, "I am not." Now he was not at all afraid to be arrested, and neither was he avoiding telling the truth, but he regarded every experience—even those against his will, if they should happen—to be secondary to being with Christ. His transgression, therefore, came from love, and his denial was rooted in his devotion to God. It did not proceed from careful reasoning, but it does testify to the fervor of his desire to be with Christ. [**32**]

18:18 Now the slaves and the officers had made a charcoal fire because it was cold, and they were standing around it and warming themselves. Peter also was standing with them and warming himself.

When Peter went inside and was encircled by the servants, he pretended to do what they were doing, even though he was overcome by grief and suffered unbearable despondency in his heart. He did this so that he might not be convicted by his sorrowful and downcast countenance of having sympathy with the man on trial and be cast outside the gates that contained all that he loved. After all, it would be completely incredible to think that the disciple was so carnally minded that he would seek relief from the chill of winter even when he was in such deep grief. Even if he could have enjoyed still greater comforts, he could not have borne to do so when Christ was so afflicted. He quite intentionally models his behavior after the carefree attitude of the attendants, and he wards off the damaging cold of winter as though nothing at all were dragging him down into despondency. That way he may convince them that he is familiar to the house and thus may escape having to answer any more questions with a denial. But the Savior's word cannot lie. He foretold to the disciple what he, as God, knew would surely happen.

18:19 Then the high priest questioned Jesus about his disciples and about his teaching.

He who was instructed in the law and who was a teacher, whom the divine proclamation enjoins to "judge with a just judgment,"[259] after arresting the Lord with a band of armed soldiers and a multitude of unholy officers, as if he were some notorious robber, asks him about his teaching and his disciples. By this he indicates that he is at a loss for charges to bring against him. [**33**] After all, the man who

[259]Cf. Deut 1:16; 16:18.

was on trial knew no sin. He asks him about his teaching, to see whether it contradicts the laws of Moses or is consonant and concurrent with the ancient decrees. And he asks what intention his disciples have, to see whether they are devoted to being guided by the ancient customs or they practice a strange new kind of worship. He does this disingenuously. He thinks that Christ will explicitly denounce the law and say that the decrees of Moses should be rejected, thus provoking audacious railing against him by the Jews so that he may appear to be paying the just penalty for fighting against God. That is because opposing the divine laws is tantamount to fighting against God, at least if one of us is caught saying or doing such a thing. They hold Christ to be a mere human being, and they think that they are correct to chastise the Lord of the law for transgressing the law, not remembering the saying, "Ungodly is the one who says to the king, 'You are a transgressor.'"[260]

18:20 Jesus answered, "I have spoken openly to the world; I have always taught in synagogues and in the temple, where all the Jews come together. I have said nothing in secret."

It would be a vain task, he says, to seek out what is known to all as if it were obscure. How could a pretext of ignorance apply to something that no one is unfamiliar with? This is what Christ is saying, it seems to us, to take away the charges that were then being maliciously devised and leveled against him by the wickedness of the rulers. But I think he is hinting at something else by these words as well. "I have spoken openly to the world," he says, that is, the utterances given to you by the mediation of Moses **[34]** come in types and shadows. They do not clearly teach what pleases God. Rather, in themselves they form a hint of the truth. Since they are wrapped up in the coarseness of the letter, they do not deliver the unobscured knowledge of what is needful for us. But "I have spoken openly to the world." I have set before you the right without enigmas and shadows of the form of what is good, and I have shown you the straight path of piety toward God with all the twists and turns removed. "I have spoken to the world," he says, not only to the race of the Israelites. Even if my teachings are not yet known throughout the world, they will be in due time. "I have always taught in synagogues." How can we miss what this means? He is apparently reminding the leaders of the Jews, even against their will, of the prophecy that speaks of him as follows. What did the divine Isaiah tell us, speaking in the person of Christ? "I did not speak in secret, in a land of darkness,"[261] and again, "I held out my hands all day long to a disobedient and rebellious people."[262] What else could "I did not speak in secret, in a land of darkness" mean but that he discoursed "openly" and spoke in places in which no small number of hearers gathered? It was quite right and appropriate for him to remind them of the prophet's statement so that they might learn that they were godlessly judging the one to whom they owed their hopes. The promise belongs to the Jews, as Paul says.[263]

18:21 "Why do you ask me? Ask those who heard what I said to them; they know what I said."

He rebukes those who are learned in the law for violating the very law they take pride in. Before he had been condemned **[35]** they imposed premature punishment on him, as it were, and they now gratuitously search for transgressions. Why then do you question me,

[260]Job 34:18.

[261]Is 45:19.
[262]Is 65:2.
[263]Rom 9:4.

he says, and summon me to defend myself when I have already endured your attack and received punishment before any accusations? Or you may construe his words in another way. Those who already hate me, he says, and see it as such a terrible insult whenever I utter my teaching would perhaps not shrink from accusing me of lying. Therefore, learn it from the lips of others. The search for witnesses is not at all difficult, since they have heard my words. Someone may perhaps imagine that he who knows hearts and inner parts was suggesting that some of the bystanders happened to hear him. But it is not so. He was referring to some of the officers who in the past had marveled at his teaching. To make our meaning clear we next need to explain how and when this occurred. Now the same divinely inspired Evangelist has described something like this to us: once when Christ our Savior was expounding and unfolding his teaching about the kingdom of heaven to the assembled Jews, the leaders of the Jewish people were cut to the heart. They were full of burning envy against him and strove to remove him from their midst. The Evangelist says, "The chief priests and Pharisees sent officers to arrest him."[264] But as our Savior's discourse grew long and great, those sent by the Jews believed along with everyone else, and they were more amazed than anyone else in the crowd. Next the Evangelist says, "Then the officers went back to the chief priests and Pharisees, who asked them, 'Why did you not arrest him?' The officers answered, 'Never has anyone spoken like this!' Then the Pharisees replied, 'Surely you have not been deceived too, have you?'"[265] Listen to how **[36]** upset the Pharisees are when they find that the officers are already convinced and amazed. Knowing this, the Savior says, "Ask those who heard; they know what I said." So by "those" he is either referring to the current bystanders, or he is indicating that even the servants of your wickedness were amazed at the beauty of my teaching.

18:22 When he had said this, one of the officers standing nearby slapped Jesus on the face, saying, "Is that how you answer the high priest?"

This too was foretold by the voice of the prophet to happen to Christ. "I gave my back," he says, "to scourging, and my cheeks to slapping."[266] He is led to the end foretold long ago, to the verdict of Jewish presumption, but also to the removal and overturning of the dishonor we deserved since we sinned first in Adam and trampled on the divine command. He is dishonored in our place since he bears our sins, as the prophet says,[267] and is afflicted for us. Just as he brings about the destruction of death by handing his own body over to death, in the same way, I think, the slap that dishonors Christ contains the destruction of the dishonor that hangs over us because of that ancient transgression and sin. The one who is worth as much as everyone was dishonored in the place of everyone. But I think the whole creation would have shuddered if it had been conscious of this audacity. The Lord of glory was insulted by the unholy hand of the one who slapped him.

I think it would display a spirit of committed inquiry to desire to learn why this audacious and unholy officer slaps Jesus even though he had said nothing at all rough or angry but gave a very gentle answer to all **[37]** the charges brought against him. One may observe that the leader of the Jews did not order him to strike Jesus and pounce on him with such incalculable irreverence. Perhaps some may propose that it was the usual

[264]Jn 7:32.
[265]Jn 7:45-47.
[266]Is 50:6.
[267]Is 53:4.

practice of the officers who brought to the leaders those who were accused of violating the law, to force them to speak courteously even against their will and to disgrace them whenever they answered rudely. But I think there was no such reason for this rage against Christ. If we direct our mind to what has already been said, however, we will find another reason for this audacious act. We just said that some of the officers had confrontations with the leaders. They were ordered to arrest Jesus, but they returned so far initiated into the mysteries and amazed that they openly said, "Never has anyone spoken like this!"[268] At this the Pharisees were enraged and said, "Surely you have not been deceived too, have you? Has any one of the leaders or of the Pharisees believed in him? But this crowd, which does not know the law—they are accursed."[269] The Savior's words reminded the leaders of the indignation that was stirred up against the officers at that time, since he summoned them as witnesses to his teaching by saying, "See, they know what I said."[270] And so the officer stands accused before them of admiring Christ. He therefore dispels the suspicion that he is favorable toward Christ and convinces the leaders otherwise by striking him on the mouth, not allowing him to say anything that would cause trouble for the reckless band of officers. **[38]**

18:23 Jesus answered, "If I have spoken wrongly, testify to the wrong. But if I have spoken rightly, why do you strike me?"

He proves the officer guilty of a gross wrong, even if the accused were not a glorious man. He foolishly strikes him who least deserved it. He was provoked to this not by an offensive response or any other pretext of insolence, but he sank to this savage brutality only because of his inbred madness. Accuse me, if you think it right, and refute my words as not being spoken correctly. But if you cannot do this, why do you strike me when my words are irreproachable?

This is the ordinary and usual interpretation of the passage. But I think the meaning of the passage goes in a different direction. Perhaps he is accusing the officer of committing great wrong not simply for striking him but because he was previously amazed at his teaching, and now without any accusation he treats him disgracefully. If you had not once been taken by my words, he says, if my teaching had not seemed beautiful to you, if you had not been convinced that I expounded the Holy Scriptures in a marvelous way, if you yourself had not exclaimed, "Never has anyone spoken like this!"[271] perhaps there would be a reason to pardon you because of your inexperience and acquit you of this charge. But since you knew and were amazed and perhaps would not have testified against my words, he says (if you think it is right to recall your own words in the present situation), what excuse could you have for your sin? You may understand the passage in this way.

But we should also notice how the Savior sketches for us an incomparable and supernatural example of his ultimate patience in these words. His actions give us a type that serves as a clear picture of his exceedingly great mercy. He who by one **[39]** mere nod can wipe out all the Jews is slapped like a slave. Yet he does nothing and does not repay those who wronged him with instant punishment. He is not weak like us, or tyrannized by anger or resentment, or overcome by the weight of their insult, but he gently puts his opponent to shame by saying that it is not right for him to strike one who has said nothing wrong. He does not forget his own characteristic behavior when he is seized by circumstances that seem terrifying. By a sound argument he tries to

[268]Jn 7:46.
[269]Jn 7:47-49.
[270]Jn 18:21.
[271]Jn 7:46.

persuade the servant of Jewish arrogance to depart from his fit of rage. Though he received "evil for good," as it is written,[272] he repays good for evil to those who disgrace him.

Our Lord Jesus Christ endures being slapped, even though he is true God, the Lord of heaven and earth. We, however, are poor, miserable people. We are "dust and ashes."[273] We are minute and insignificant. We are compared to the young shoot of a plant: "As for mortals, their days are like grass; they flourish like a flower of the field," as it is written.[274] Yet when one of our brothers happens to have words with us and utters one little hurtful expression, we think we ought to be enraged against him with the fury of dragons. We are not satisfied even if we hurl thousands of words at him in return for the one. We do not grant forgiveness to human pettiness, and neither do we consider the common frailty of our nature, nor do we bury the anger provoked by this in love for one another, nor do we look at Jesus himself, "who is the pioneer and perfecter of our faith."[275] Instead we are eager to avenge ourselves, and that with bitter vengeance, even though the divine Scripture says in one place, "The way of remembering injuries leads to death,"[276] and in another place, "Let none of you remember in your heart the injury of your brother."[277] Therefore, let Christ the Lord of all be an example to us of gentleness **[40]** toward one another and patience beyond imagination. That is why he says to us somewhere, "A disciple is not above the teacher nor a slave above the master."[278] **[41]**

[272]Ps 35:12 (Ps 34:12 LXX).
[273]Gen 18:27.
[274]Ps 103:15 (Ps 102:15 LXX).
[275]Heb 12:2.
[276]Prov 12:28 (LXX).
[277]Zech 7:10 (LXX).
[278]Mt 10:24.

Chapters in Book Twelve

1. The Son is by nature God, even though he is found calling the Father his God on account of us; on the words, "I am going to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God." [43]

OUR FATHER AMONG THE SAINTS
CYRIL
ARCHBISHOP OF ALEXANDRIA
ON THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

BOOK TWELVE

18:24-27 Then Annas sent him bound to Caiaphas the high priest. Now Simon Peter was standing and warming himself. They asked him, "You are not also one of his disciples, are you?" He denied it and said, "I am not." One of the slaves of the high priest, a relative of the man whose ear Peter had cut off, asked, "Did I not see you in the garden with him?" Again Peter denied it, and at that moment the cock crowed.

The divinely inspired Evangelist halts the course of his narrative like a galloping horse and brings it back again for our benefit. Why? Before narrating what follows, he needs to show Peter's third denial. And the particular way this event happened is as follows. By design he picks up the story at the beginning and says that Jesus was sent by [44] Annas to Caiaphas. He portrays Peter being questioned by the servants who were warming themselves with him at the fire and also by one of the relatives of the man he had struck. Under these circumstances Peter made his third denial. Then he mentions the cock crow, showing that our Savior's statement was not wrong in any way. He foreknew and foretold the weakness of his own disciple in the midst of troubles. He who bequeathed us this book, taught by God as he was, might not have mentioned it at all if he had not considered the babbling nonsense of the enemies of God. Otherwise some of those who are especially intent on making war against the Savior's glory would have immediately said, "Show us Peter's denial. How and where did Christ's prediction come to pass since, according to you, he cannot lie? After all, you say that he is the truth and that he shines forth from the true Father." The divinely inspired Evangelist, then, needed to give us an account of this to show that Christ is telling the utter truth.

But perhaps one of the opponents will refrain from attacking us with such an argument and will instead make a grievous accusation against Peter, charging that genuine disciple of incomparable cowardice and claiming that he was so ready to fall away verbally that he fell into denial three times before experiencing any hint of tribulation or coming near the gates of danger. Perhaps talk of this sort may be fitting for those not yet initiated in the faith, but I dismiss it completely. I will bid farewell to their nonsense and turn my attention to a defense of what happened, citing the events of the mystical *oikonomia* as proof for the benefit of those who are accustomed to reflect on the mysteries.

The most wise Evangelist had to—had to—mention these events, and for good reason, so that the hearers might understand what even the teachers of the world were before the [45] resurrection of Christ and before the Holy Spirit descended on them, and what they were afterward, when they received the grace of the Spirit, which Christ called "power from on high."[1] Anyone can see that they were quite eager to attain virtue and to dress themselves for action in their desire to follow Christ and that they overcame every danger, which they so often encountered. But since Christ our Savior had not yet destroyed the power of death, the fear of death was still intense and utterly unapproachable. They who had not yet received the Spirit or been armed by grace from above, whose minds were not yet completely free of human frailty and endowed with supernatural courage, showed themselves not entirely unshaken by the fear of experiencing it. Just as iron, even though it is hard by nature, cannot collide with harder stones without injury unless it is fortified by the forge, so also the human soul, even though it shows great courage by its unswerving desire for every good, will never overcome the severity of this conflict without first being ripened by the grace of the divine Spirit. Even the disciples therefore were frail at first, but when they had received the Spirit of almighty God, they left their frailty behind and were transformed into his strength. By their communion with him they rose to supernatural courage.

Even the weakness of the saints, then, has been recorded for our benefit and for the praise and glory of God. He transforms weakness into strength and raises up into an invincible tower what could be overturned by mere fear and sometimes broken up by the mere suggestion of experiencing death. [46] What happened to one, or a few, of the saints serves as an example and a consolation for us. From their experience we are taught not to focus on our own weakness and foolishly grow slack in our service to God but rather to trust in him who can make us all strong and to boast in his supernatural accomplishments and in his grace, which exceeds our hope.

18:28 Then they took Jesus from Caiaphas to Pilate's headquarters. It was early in the morning. They themselves did not enter the headquarters, so as to avoid ritual defilement and to be able to eat the Passover.

"Judge with a just judgment," and, "Do not kill the innocent and those in the right."[2] This is what the law and the divine command explicitly proclaim. So these miserable people are ashamed—even against their will—of their lack of charges against him. They find no pretext for their rage against Christ, and they are prevented from killing him themselves by the purification that was at hand since they are about to sacrifice the Passover lamb in accordance with the law, even though the law has no force among them. So they take him to Pilate, trusting in their great ignorance that they would not at all be implicated in the charge of unholy murder if they did not commit it themselves but entrusted the deed to the hands of another, even though their scheme is contrary to the laws of Moses. Besides that, they are convicted of the following utterly ridiculous behavior. They sentence to death him who knew no sin, bringing down such horrifying ungodliness on their own heads, but they avoid the threshold of the governor's headquarters as though it would cause them to be defiled, and they anxiously avoid associating with men who are still unclean. I suppose they believed that stones and bodies of the same kind as theirs could defile the human soul. But

[1]Lk 24:49.

[2]Ex 23:7; cf. Deut 1:16.

they thought that the most shameful of all crimes, **[47]** unholy murder, harmed them not at all. And miraculously, or rather stupidly and most senselessly of all, they thought they were purified by the slaughter of the sheep, when it typifies for us nothing but the shadow of the mystery of Christ. They honor the type but insult the truth itself. As they perform purification, they are polluted by their murder of Christ. Christ was right, then, when he called them "whitewashed tombs,"[3] outwardly adorned with the superficial embellishments of art but inwardly full of stench and detestable impurity; and again when he said that they "strain out a gnat but swallow a camel."[4] While they were often very exact about the most insignificant and unimportant matters, so to speak, or even about nothing at all (what is a gnat, after all?), they paid no attention to the most weighty charges against them. They wash the outside of the cup and the plate but give no thought to the utter uncleanness within. Behold—behold, even though the prophet Jeremiah clearly says, "O Jerusalem, wash your heart clean of wickedness so that you may be saved,"[5] they are convinced that the ungodliness in their mind is of no importance whatsoever. But when they bring Christ to Pilate, they avoid certain places and the bodies of uncircumcised men as if they were cursed. And even though they would not carry out the lawless deed with their own hands, they make Pilate a servant, as it were, of their cruelty, in their ignorance imagining that they would be free from all blame. Someone might be surprised to learn that the holy prophets were not unaware of this ungodliness of theirs. The blessed Isaiah said somewhere of them, "Woe to the lawless! The evil that their hands have done will happen to them."[6] And again, Ezekiel, "As you have done, so shall it be done **[48]** to you; your reward will return on your own head."[7] Indeed, the divine psalmist himself also cries out, "Render to them their repayment; repay them according to the works of their hands."[8] Just as they brought Christ the Savior of all to the soldiers of Rome, so they undergo the same thing in return when they are handed over to the dominion of Rome and consumed by the power of their conquerors. So terrible was the war that broke out against them and so horrible were the circumstances they endured that some (indeed many) would gladly have chosen, if it were possible, to go into the mountains and rocks and die there rather than to see the war. The Lord foretold that they would choose this when he said, "When you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then you will say to the mountains, 'Cover us!' and to the hills, 'Fall on us!'"[9]

18:29 So Pilate went out to them and said, "What accusation do you bring against this man?"

They are avoiding (so they think) the pollution of stones and walls, so Pilate goes out and inquires of them the reason they came to him. He asks them to explain the charges against the man they brought to him, indirectly condemning the leaders of the Jews. As a foreigner, he respects the Jewish law and treats their prevailing customs with reverence. Contrary to his custom, he hurries out of his headquarters, communicating to the Jews by the significance of this act that their law ought to be obeyed. They, on the other hand, think contrary to the divine commands and pay very little attention to the decrees of Moses since they are attempting an unjust murder. Pilate, who is without the law, **[49]** asks for the charges and investigates the accusations they

[3]Mt 23:27.
[4]Mt 23:24.
[5]Jer 4:14.
[6]Is 3:11.
[7]Obad 1:15.
[8]Ps 28:4 (Ps 27:4 LXX).
[9]Lk 21:20; 23:30.

are bringing against Jesus, showing them that it is absurd to chastise or impose a penalty on those who have done no wrong; while they, who have nothing to say, bring him as if he were a fierce robber. It was said quite reasonably, then, to the Jewish synagogue, "Sodom has been justified by you."[10] And Christ himself says somewhere, in accusation against the madness of the Israelites in this situation, "You have not even acted in accordance with the ordinances of the nations around you."[11] And the statement is true, since the Greeks would not bring their usual sacrifices to the stones and sticks they consider to be gods with polluted and unwashed hands, and neither would they destroy anyone who was not caught in the most extreme crimes; but the Jews, even though they are about to sacrifice the Passover lamb to him who is by nature God, stain their souls with innocent blood and are intent on unjustly putting to death him who is a stranger to all sin.

18:30 They answered, "If this man were not a criminal, we would not have handed him over to you."

They are at a loss for a legitimate charge, but they cloak the disgrace of their ungodliness and their apparent decision to put him to death unjustly by giving the sophistical answer that they would not have brought Jesus to pay a penalty if he were not caught in a crime. They are still pretending to obey the law, which commands them to render a holy judgment in all things. And miraculously they employ their respect for the law as a weapon [against the lawgiver].[12] They who do not shrink from accusing the lawgiver claim credit as keepers of the law. They claim that he who had come to take away sin did evil, so that Christ is shown to be right when he says of them through the voice of the prophet Isaiah, "Woe to them, for they have strayed from me! They are wretched, [**50**] for they have transgressed against me. I redeemed them, but they have spoken lies against me."[13]

18:31 Pilate said to them, "Take him yourselves and judge him according to your law."

It would not be right for me, he says, to impose a sentence of illegal penalties on a man who has been convicted of no wrong and who remains unjudged by you. You judge him by your own law, he says, if indeed it has decreed that one who is completely innocent should be punished. Truly, it is not a little ridiculous, or rather it is worthy of everlasting lament, that the laws of the Greeks acquit the Lord, so that even Pilate shrinks from punishing him when he is brought with such nebulous charges, while they say that he must be put to death, even though they boast in being instructed in the divine law.

18:31-32 The Jews replied, "We are not permitted to put anyone to death." This was to fulfill what Jesus had said when he indicated the kind of death he was to die.

They say that the purification accomplished by the slaughter of the sheep—if indeed any purification is possible for those who dare to commit such atrocities—is a hindrance to them and a forceful impediment, as it were, to their unholy blood guilt. They would have been quite ready to commit the godless act themselves without the cooperation of anyone else. After all, the mind of the Jews is quite prone to commit every kind of wickedness, to fear no extraordinary acts and to blush at nothing that is displeasing to God. Therefore, they thought

[10]Cf. Ezek 16:52.
[11]Ezek 5:7 (LXX).
[12]About twenty letters are missing from the manuscript here.
[13]Hos 7:13.

Pilate should lend them his own cruelty and become an imitator of Jewish insanity and serve them on this occasion, since they did not have free recourse to their madness. But even **[51]** this they say to prove that Christ was telling the truth when he foreknew how and with what sort of death he would die, and he foretold this to his holy disciples. What did he say to them? "See, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man is handed over into the hands of sinners, and they will crucify him and will kill him, and on the third day he will be raised."[14] It is necessary to mention this. He had to foreknow his suffering so that no one would think that he before whom all things are "naked and laid bare"[15] experienced this against his will, but rather one should be convinced that he willingly submitted to the cross for us and for our sakes.

18:33 Then Pilate entered the headquarters again, summoned Jesus and asked him, "Are you the king of the Jews?"

Since they have no accusation at all, or at least nothing to allege against him that imposes a just penalty on those who commit it, and since Pilate is there asking for the reasons why they brought him, they say that Jesus sinned against Caesar, usurping his rule over the Jews and transferring the glory of his reign into his own grasp. With the utmost wicked intent the scheme was devised and the false testimony was prepared. They knew that Pilate, however unwilling he might be, would surely give thought to his own safety and swiftly and precipitously punish whoever was accused of such a thing. Since the inhabitants of the land of the Jews were constantly provoked to riots and unrest and easily incited to revolt, Caesar's judges were very sensitive to this. They carefully guarded good order and were very swift to impose punishment on those who were accused (sometimes falsely) of this crime. The Jews therefore made it a charge **[52]** against Christ that he reigned over the Jews. So they were justly cast out, and the Gentiles were brought in, placed under the yoke and made subject to the reign of Christ. "Ask of me," it says, "and I will give you the Gentiles as your heritage and the ends of the earth as your possession."[16] When the one nation of the Jews provoked him, all the nations were given to Christ, the ends of the earth in place of one land (I mean the land of the Jews). As Paul says, "Their stumbling means riches for the world, and their defeat means riches for the Gentiles."[17]

Pilate then states clearly what he heard the Jews mumbling, and he commands the Lord to offer a defense and say whether he is truly the "king of the Jews." Pilate is distressed, it seems, and he thinks Caesar's rule is in danger, so he inquires very intently so that he can exact appropriate retribution on what has been done in order to make himself blameless in the office entrusted to him by the Romans.

18:34 Jesus answered, "Do you ask this on your own, or did others tell you about me?"

Since no one, he says, has openly brought this charge against me, where did you get this idea? There is no doubt that this scheme and this trap have been devised by the malice of the Jews. Otherwise, he says, you would not be both the judge and the accuser. Now Christ said this to bring Pilate to the realization that nothing could escape him, even if it was unseen and devised and said in secret, so that when he recognized that Christ's nature was more than human, he might be more hesitant to render service to the cruelty of those who brought Christ to him. **[53]** At the same time he was

[14]Mt 20:18; 26:45; 17:23.
[15]Heb 4:13.
[16]Ps 2:8.
[17]Rom 11:12.

teaching that it was utterly unjust for Pilate to force him who had been convicted of no crime to pay the penalty merely on the basis of the words of others.

18:35 Pilate replied, "I am not a Jew, am I? Your own nation and the chief priests have handed you over to me. What have you done?"

He now exposes the villainy of the Jews and all but summons the multitude of the accusers. It is as if he said, "It does not concern me to know about you, since I am not a Jew. Rather it is fitting for your own nation and kindred, who perhaps because they know this are bringing you to be put to death." Next he brings accusation down on his own head. The question, "What have you done?" indicates nothing other than this. The holy Evangelist was very zealous to narrate in great detail especially the matters concerning the judgment itself and that Pilate asked Jesus, "What have you done?" By this we may best perceive the lack of charges against him and learn that, as none were brought forward and Christ our Savior was convicted of nothing, the sentence of death pronounced against him was ungodly and utterly unjust.

18:36 Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not from this world. If my kingdom were from this world, my followers would be fighting to keep me from being handed over to the Jews. But as it is, my kingdom is not from here."

He dispelled Pilate's fear, as the appointed guardian of Caesar's rule, since he had supposed that Christ was planning a revolt against the temporal law, as the Jews had vainly suggested. This is what they were hinting at when they said, "If this man were not a criminal, we would not have handed him over to you,"[18] **[54]** meaning that his crime was revolt. They were pretending that they were so well disposed toward the Romans that they could not bear even to utter the word *revolt*. That is the reason they said they brought him to be punished. When Christ answered these charges, he did not deny that he was a king (since he had to tell the truth). But he clearly showed that he was not hostile to Caesar's kingdom by indicating that his rule was not earthly, but that he reigned as God over heaven and earth and things still greater than these.

What, then, was his proof? And how did he remove their suspicion? He says that he never used bodyguards or warriors and that he had no one at all who was determined to offer resistance—not only to prevent him from losing his kingdom but even to deliver him from the danger inflicted on him, which was prepared by the hand of the Jews. (The danger did not come from their ruler, that is, Caesar.) When he refutes this outcry with such a clear proof, it becomes clear to Pilate that the audacious case against Christ was without foundation. Yet without compulsion and with no one forcing him to that outcome, he complies with the pleasure of the Jews to the destruction of his own soul and incurs with them the charge of killing Christ. By saying that his kingdom is above the world, Christ not only assuages Pilate's fear and frees him from suspecting revolt, but he also persuades him to regard him in an exalted fashion, and he initiates Pilate's catechesis, in a way, by his defense. **[55]**

18:37 Pilate asked him, "So you are a king?"

He turns the truth into a charge against Christ. When he hears, "My kingdom is not from here,"[19] he is delivered from fear of revolt. Nevertheless he fixes on the confession of this fact and defines the mere statement that he has a kingdom as an accusation, even though Christ

[18]Jn 18:30.

[19]Jn 18:36.

insists it is not of the earth. He drives Jesus, as it were, to this point. "You have already admitted," he says, "that you are a king."

18:37-38 Jesus answered, "You say that I am a king. For this I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice." Pilate asked him, "What is truth?"

He does not deny the glory of his kingdom, and neither does he leave it to Pilate's words alone to confirm the fact. As God he is king even if someone might not want him to be. Once again he shows the power of the truth, which convinces Pilate even against his will to declare the glory of him who is on trial. "You have said," he says, "that I am a king." For this reason, he says, he was born and arrived (in this world, that is) when he became human "to testify to the truth," that is, to remove falsehood from the world, to overthrow the demon who was tyrannizing the world through deception, and to install truth (that is, the nature that is truly and naturally royal) as the king of all. From this it is clear that he has the ability to rule and have dominion over heaven and earth and everything whatsoever that has been brought into being, not by usurpation or importation from the outside but essentially and by nature. Then, in order to make it clear that he was not unaware that Pilate was hard of hearing **[56]** and difficult to lead to right thinking, Christ profitably adds, "Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice." The word of truth is readily received by those who have already learned it and love it, but not by those who have not. In fact the prophet Isaiah said to certain people, "If you do not believe, neither will you understand."[20] Pilate immediately showed this to be true when he said, "What is truth?" Just as for those whose physical eyes are injured and who have totally lost their sense of sight, their perception of color is entirely gone, even if one were to bring gold before them and show them a sparkling precious stone—yes, even the brilliant light of the sun will be unremarkable to them, since they have no perception of it and cannot profit from it; so also for those who have injured minds the truth seems foul and ugly, though it implants its spiritual and divine radiance in the souls of those who behold it.

18:38-39 After he had said this he went out to the Jews again and told them, "I find no case against him. But you have a custom that I release one prisoner for you at the Passover. Do you want me to release for you the king of the Jews?"

To the condemnation of the Jews' irreverence and cruelty, he exceeds them in the knowledge of what is just and right, even though he cannot boast in divine instruction but is merely a guardian of human decrees. He gives special respect to the ordinances of those who gave him his rule as a gift. The teachers of the Jewish law very likely would have escaped the snare of the devil if they had chosen to think and act in the same way, and they would have averted the most abominable of all **[57]** crimes. (I am referring, of course, to the murder of Christ.) Pilate tries to avoid condemning Christ, who had been arrested and captured for no crime, and he says that it is not right for one who is so far removed from any charge to pay a penalty. He quite correctly maintains that this is completely contrary to the laws that he knows, thus putting to shame the most frightful and senseless opposition of the Jews to the divine law. He thought that since they professed to honor justice and fairness, he would immediately persuade them by presenting what is just and right. Next he probably calculated that the acquittal of the one they brought to him of all charges would constitute an outright condemnation of the recklessness

[20] Is 7:9.

of the Jews. In order to prevent them from becoming even more reckless on this account and fomenting terrible unrest, he paved the way, as it were, for the acquittal and put it in the best light by saying, "You have a custom that I release one prisoner for you at the Passover. Do you want me to release for you the king of the Jews?" By calling Jesus "king of the Jews," he is joking, and by his jest he is trying to calm the anger of the furious crowd. By this fact he also demonstrates quite clearly that the accusation against this man is baseless. After all, the Roman officer would never have considered a man condemned for usurpation and revolution against Rome to be worthy of release. The very reasons, therefore, that he gave for his release testified to Christ's complete innocence.

I think that this illustrates the main point of the passage. However, as I was investigating and looking for myself into how the custom came about for the Jews to ask for the release of one person (a thief, perhaps, or a murderer), the thought came to me that they were no longer doing everything in accordance with the divine law but that they decided to use their own customs and turned to a fleeting **[58]** way of life that does not completely agree with the laws of Moses. As I searched the divine Scriptures, however, and tracked down on every side the reason for the custom, I happened upon a certain divine saying that led me to suspect that the Jews asked for the release of a malefactor in fulfillment of one of the divine laws, even though they were quite misled in doing so. There is written at the end of the book called Numbers a law concerning voluntary and involuntary homicide. After clearly defining the penalty for premeditated murder, the text immediately proceeds to the case of involuntary murder. After other remarks it makes the following statement: "But if someone pushes another without enmity, or hurls any object at him without lying in wait, or without realizing it strikes him with a stone that could kill someone and it falls on him and he dies, and he was not his enemy and was not trying to harm him; then the assembly will judge between the slayer and the avenger of blood according to these ordinances, and the assembly will rescue the slayer from the avenger of blood, and the assembly will restore him to the city of refuge from which he fled."[21] Since that was the written command, it seems that when any were involved in such calamities, the Jews would come together in a crowd and ask for one of them to be released so that they did not seem to disregard this law completely. The law commanded that this be the work of the entire assembly. But even though they were permitted by the law to release him, they asked Pilate to do this. Once they accepted Roman **[59]** rule, they ceded most of their own affairs to the Roman laws. In fact, though they were permitted to put to death one who was convicted of certain crimes, they brought Jesus to Pilate as one of these, saying, "We are not permitted to put anyone to death." Though they were feigning cleansing for the purification of Passover, they were really flattering Rome by this, since they were entrusting to Roman law the authority that the divine decree had given them from above.

18:40 They shouted in reply, "Not this man, but Barabbas!" Now Barabbas was a bandit.

Here too the Jews are convicted of utter transgression, yielding to their own desires rather than honoring the ancient decrees. Though the law of Moses commands that one arrested for involuntary homicide be released, not someone like Barabbas (how could such a thing be?), they ask for a notorious bandit. That the man mentioned here is dangerous and brutal and implicated in the charge of murder, the divinely inspired Peter makes clear when he says to the people of the Jews, "But

[21]Num 35:22-25.

you rejected the holy and righteous one and asked to have a murderer given to you."[22] And so they preferred a bandit to him who disregarded equality with God the Father and clothed himself with our poverty to rescue us from the true murderer, that is, Satan. They had the glory of the priesthood of the law, and they prided themselves greatly on this, but they passed over and completely rejected as worthless the statement, "Judge with a just judgment,"[23] when they acquitted the murderer and condemned Christ and said with one accord, "Not this man, but Barabbas!" The Jews, then, will pay the penalty for this ungodliness. [**60**] One must marvel at the divinely inspired Scriptures, which view the following cry of rejection as spoken in the person of Christ. The prophet Jeremiah says, "I have forsaken my house, I have abandoned my heritage; I have given my soul's beloved into the hands of her enemies. My heritage has become to me like a lion in the forest; she has lifted up her voice against me."[24] It seems good to explain what a lion in the forest does. They say that when this great and most terrifying beast of the forest wants to hunt, it goes up to the top of a hill and lets loose a loud and terrible roar. It strikes such fear in the heart of the hearers, whether man or beast, that they cannot endure the unbearable sound of his threatening voice and they immediately fall down. And their fall is caused by the beast's voice. God confirms, in a way, our explanation of this when he says through the prophet, "The lion roars; who will not fear?"[25] The assembly of the Jews, then, has become a lion in the forest, as it were, hunting for Christ our Savior, at least as far as their attempt at vain accusation against him is concerned. (After all, the divine nature is not at all subject to terror or fear.) The assembly clamored to put him to death even though Pilate tried to get them to choose his release. Therefore, those who have not yet learned the divine law are found by their actions to be superior to those who have been instructed in the law.

19:1-3 Then Pilate took Jesus and had him flogged. And the soldiers wove a crown of thorns and put it on his head, and they dressed him in a purple robe. They kept coming up to him, saying, "Hail, king of the Jews!" and striking him on the face.

He flogs him unjustly and allows the crowd of soldiers [**61**] to ridicule him and to place a crown of thorns on him and to throw a purple robe on him and to wound him with blows and other disgraces. He thought that he would easily shame the Jewish people if only they would see this man, who was free from all charges, suffer such excessive punishment. He was flogged unjustly that he might deliver us from the blows we deserved. He was ridiculed and slapped so that we might ridicule the one who ridicules us, Satan, and we might escape the sin of transgression that clings to us. If we think rightly, we will hold that all of Christ's sufferings happened for us and in our place, and that they have the power to destroy and ward off what happened to us for good reason because we fell away from God. Just as when he who knew no death gave his own flesh for our life, that fact was sufficient to destroy death for all (since one died in the place of all); so also we must understand that the Lord suffering these things for us also sufficed to deliver us all from flogging and dishonor. Otherwise how is it that "By his bruises we were healed," as it is written?[26] For we have all gone astray, each "to our own way," as the blessed prophet Isaiah says, "and the Lord has handed him over for our sins,"[27] and "he is

[22]Acts 3:14.
[23]Zech 2:9.
[24]Jer 7:7-8.
[25]Amos 3:5.
[26]Is 53:5.
[27]Is 53:6.

pained for us."[28] He has been bruised for our transgressions, and he has given his back "to flogging and his cheeks to striking," as the same prophet says somewhere.[29] And so the soldiers, when they had arrested Jesus like some pretender to the throne, ridiculed him as soldiers do. That is why the crown of thorns was brought and put upon his brow. It is a symbol of earthly reign. And the purple robe was put on him as an image, as it were, and a type of royalty, **[62]** and also as the occasion for more ridicule. The soldiers came up to him and said, "Hail, king of the Jews!"

I have heard some say, or rather some take great delight in saying, that the crown of thorns signifies the multitude of idolaters and should be understood as a kind of diadem that will be taken up by Christ through faith in him. They compare the Gentiles to barren and useless thorns because they do not have the fruit of godliness but are rather fit for fuel to feed the all-consuming fire, just like the sweepings in the fields or the wild thorn that springs up without any tending. They also say that the royal garment, or the purple robe, signifies his coming reign over the whole world. Everything that does not violate a godly interpretation and whose belief will not be unprofitable should be accepted. Therefore, we should not reject this explanation, since it involves careful and ingenious attention to the text.

19:4 Pilate went out again and said to them, "Look, I am bringing him out to you to let you know that I find no case against him."

He admits his mistake and is not ashamed. He says that he had him flogged in vain, and he promises to show him to them, supposing that he would glut, as it were, their savage anger through such a pitiful sight. He practically accuses them, and that publicly, of putting Christ to death unjustly and of forcing him, who cannot transgress his own laws without punishment, to be an outright lawbreaker. Christ's statement is thereby shown to be true and is fulfilled for him that "the ruler of this world is coming, and he will find nothing against me."[30] Observe how after Satan throws everything into confusion, he finds nothing at all that is condemned by God and classified as a sin **[63]** which, if he could perhaps pin it on Christ, would make his condemnation just and cause him to be deserving of the accusations against him. In the same way that in Adam he conquered all of human nature in one man, rendering it subject to sin, so also here he is conquered by that nature. After all, he who had no sin was a man, even though he was by nature God. And just as condemnation for transgression was brought about for all through the one man, the first Adam, in the same way the blessing from Christ being justified extends to all through one man, the second Adam. Paul is a witness to this when he says, "Just as through one man, condemnation came to all, so also through one man, the righteousness of life came to all."[31] We are therefore diseased through the disobedience of the first Adam and the resulting curse, but we are enriched by the obedience of the second and the resulting blessing. As God, he is the Lord of the law, but as a human being, he became a keeper of the law along with us. For example we find him saying to us, "Whoever loves me will keep my commandments, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and I remain in his love."[32] Notice how as God and lawgiver he orders us to keep his commandments, but as a keeper of the law just like us he maintains that he too keeps his Father's commandment.

[28]Is 53:4 (LXX).
[29]Is 50:6.
[30]Jn 14:30.
[31]Rom 5:18.
[32]Jn 14:23; 15:10.

19:5-6 So Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. Pilate said to them, "Here is the man!" When the chief priests and the officers saw him, they shouted, "Crucify him! Crucify him!"

He displayed to them the Lord of all, godlessly and outrageously treated and insulted by the unbearable ridicule of the soldiers, convinced that now the sheer wrath of the Jews would be sated and cease by the mere sight of **[64]** such a pitiful and disgraceful spectacle. But they were so far removed from either saying or doing anything merciful toward him or entertaining any good intention that they sank below even the cruelty of beasts and were carried away to an even greater crime and made a more furious outcry to condemn him to cruelest death and force him to suffer the most shameful punishment of all. What could be so bitter a punishment as crucifixion on a tree? And it seems that the most wise Evangelist ascribed to the Jewish leaders alone the incitement of such godlessness. Notice how with careful precision, as it were, he says, "When the chief priests and officers saw him, they shouted, 'Crucify him! Crucify him!'" When the crowd of common people was somewhat ashamed at the evils inflicted on Christ—perhaps they called to mind the miracles he worked—the rulers first started the clamor and kindled the passions of the people under their control to a monstrous fury. God's statement about them in the prophets is true: "The shepherds are stupid and have not inquired of the Lord; therefore the whole pasture has no understanding and the sheep have been scattered."[33] And the statement is true. Since the guidance of the leaders did not lead to the knowledge of Christ, those who were in the category of "pasture," that is, the common crowd, perished and fell into a ruinous lack of counsel concerning Christ. Let whoever wishes investigate the instigation of this ungodliness, and they will place the blame on the heads of the leaders. It was their unholy plan from the beginning. They were the ones who bribed the traitor with the temple treasure to make a deal with them. They were the ones who joined the band of soldiers with their own officers and ordered them to capture Christ like an infamous bandit. They were the ones who brought him to Pilate. **[65]** And now, when they see him flogged and practically reeling from the disgrace heaped on him by everyone, they extend their wrath even further and utter words of limitless envy. Their intention was to kill the Lord of the vineyard, since they thought they would possess his inheritance without risk to themselves. If Christ were removed, they would again rule and enjoy the respect of all. But as the psalmist says, "He who sits in heaven laughs at them; the Lord will hold them in derision."[34] Nothing turned out according to their plan; on the contrary, the nature of affairs went in completely the opposite direction.

Pilate said to them, "'Take him yourselves and crucify him; I find no case against him." Pilate is astonished that the Jewish people and the inhuman crowd of high priests would reach such a level of audacity that they would not hesitate to impose such a horrible death on Christ, even though no charge was discovered that made him deserving of this. That is why he says, with the annoyance of one who was himself practically insulted, "Do you make me the judge in this unjust murder? Shall I become the slayer of the innocent, contrary to all Roman laws? Shall I listen to your words and dismiss what is profitable to me? If I recklessly put myself in the service of your request, can I not expect to suffer horrible consequences? If you do not think that you are committing an unholy act, if you do not

[33]Jer 10:21.

[34]Ps 2:4.

consider your deed to be grievous, then do it yourself," he says. "You who boast in your divine learning, you who take pride in your knowledge of the law—you erect the cross! You dare the murder! You do the unholy deed yourself, bringing down on your own head the accusation of such godlessness! **[66]** Let the recklessness be Jewish, and let the crime of murder rest on you. If you have a law that imposes such a terrible penalty on someone who has not sinned and that punishes the innocent, let it be carried out by you. I will not allow myself to be a party to it." This, we may suppose, is what Pilate was saying. His statement is pregnant with a meaning such as this. We may also be astonished once again at the shamelessness of the Jews in this matter, since they were not even embarrassed by the just judgment of a foreigner even though the divine law says of them, "For the lips of the priest should guard knowledge, and they should seek the law from his mouth."[35]

19:7 The Jews answered him, "We have a law, and according to our law he ought to die because he has claimed to be the Son of God."

When the false accusation that they contrived in the beginning turned out to be stale and established no attempt at revolution or revolt against Caesar's rule—since the Lord refuted these charges by saying, "My kingdom is not from this world. If my kingdom were from this world, my followers would be fighting to keep me from being handed over to the Jews"—and when Pilate rendered a judgment that was just and impartial and not to their liking, saying publicly that he found no charge against him, they had the gall to change their tactics to something completely different. They asserted that they had a law that condemned the Savior to death. And what is that law? The law that decrees punishment for blasphemers. It is written in the book called Leviticus that certain men, counted among the Jews, fought with each other, according to the Scriptures, in the camp. One of them, it says, uttered the divine name **[67]** and blessed it (meaning that he cursed and blasphemed it) and was condemned to die and to pay the penalty of an unholy tongue. God plainly declares, "Anyone who curses God will bear the sin. One who names the name of the Lord shall be put to death. The whole assembly of Israel shall stone the blasphemer. Aliens as well as citizens, when they name the name of the Lord, shall be put to death."[36]

But perhaps someone will raise doubts and ask, "What is the law saying, and what does it intend to signify by this? It would not be unreasonable for someone guilty of blasphemy against God to die," one might say. "That would be completely just. But what if someone insults one of the false gods? Is that person not free from sin? After all, it says that anyone who curses God will bear the sin." What shall we reply to this? The lawgiver is trustworthy. I think that the desire to insult even those that are not gods by nature is a kind of preparation that urges us down the path toward unguarded speech toward the one who is God by nature. That is why, in another passage, he forbids us from doing it, saying, "You shall not revile gods."[37] He thought that the name of the divinity should receive its proper glory, even if some possess it falsely. The law certainly does not command us to ascribe any honor to false gods, but it teaches that the name of the divinity is to be considered holy, even if it is stolen by some.

Since the law decrees that anyone who falls under the accusation of blasphemy should be punished by death, they say that the Lord is subject to this penalty. The text says that "he claimed to be the Son of God." So we should

[35]Mal 2:7.

[36]Lev 24:15-16.
[37]Ex 22:28.

next recall where and how this claim was made by Christ. At the pool **[68]** named after the sheep gate he healed the paralytic of his long and grievous illness on the sabbath day. But they who ought to marvel at such a miracle were offended and accused him of breaking the law just because it was the sabbath. But then Christ defended himself by saying, "My Father is still working, and I also am working."[38] In response to this the Evangelist then remarks, "For this reason the Jews persecuted him, because he was not only breaking the sabbath but was also calling God his own Father, thereby making himself equal to God."[39] The Jews, then, were scandalized when Christ called the Lord of all his Father. Then Christ made this mild reply to them: "It is written in your law, 'I said, you are gods, and you are all sons of the Most High.' If those to whom the word of God came were called 'gods'—and the Scripture cannot be annulled—can you say that the one whom the Father has sanctified and sent into the world is blaspheming because I said, 'I am God's Son'?"[40] But the people of the Jews remember none of these things, and they make the truth a charge against the truth. Because Christ said what is true by nature, they claim that he should die. Therefore, I will employ the words of the prophet, "How can you say, 'We are wise and the law of the Lord is with us'?"[41] Would it not have been right first to go through a careful search of who Christ is and where he is from, and then if he is caught in a lie to correct him fairly, but if he is telling the truth to worship him? Why do you abandon the search and the certainty of Holy Scriptures and proceed only to condemnation, making the truth the pretext for your accusation? When you said to Pilate, "He has claimed to be the Son of God," you should have charged **[69]** him also with the works of the divine nature and accused him of miraculous wonders. After that you should have cried out that a man dead for three days rose and came back to life with one word from the Savior.[42] You should have summoned the only begotten son of the widow and the daughter of the ruler of the synagogue. You should have recalled that God-befitting statement addressed to the widow's son, "Young man, I say to you, rise!"[43] or to the little girl, "Child, get up!"[44] In addition you should have taught that he granted sight to the blind and cleansing to the lepers, and on top of that with a single command he calmed the tossing of the raging sea and the blast of the furious winds, and whatever else Christ did. But they bury these things in ungrateful silence. They maliciously omit those acts that show him to be God, and they proceed straight to their false accusations. Those wretched people cry out to a foreigner, who had no knowledge at all of the divine Scripture and who saw that Jesus was a man, "He has claimed to be the Son of God," even though the divinely inspired Scriptures cry out that the Word of God would visit the world in human form. "For behold," it says, "the virgin will conceive and bear a son, and they will call his name 'Emmanuel,' which means 'God with us.'"[45] What else could be born of a virgin except a human being like us, as far as the appearance and nature of his body is concerned? But along with being human he was also truly God.

19:8-9 Now when Pilate heard this, he was more afraid than ever. He entered his headquarters again and asked Jesus, "Where are you from?" But Jesus gave him no answer.

The malicious plan of the Jews turns out contrary to their expectations. They elevate their charge to the highest degree **[70]** by

[38]Jn 5:17.
[39]Jn 5:18.
[40]Jn 10:34-36.
[41]Jer 8:8.
[42]Jn 11:39.
[43]Lk 7:14.
[44]Lk 8:54.
[45]Mt 1:23; Is 7:14.

saying that Christ ventured to sin against God himself. But Pilate considers the excessive nature of the charge to warrant an increase in caution. He is more oppressed by fear and undertakes a more careful investigation of him than he did before. He inquires in more detail who he is and where he comes from, not refusing to believe, it seems to me, that though he is a man, he can also be the Son of God. Now he gets this idea and conviction not from the Holy Scriptures but from the error of the Greeks. The Greek myths refer to many people as demigods and children of the gods. The Romans were even more superstitious in such matters. They constantly gave the divine name to the more illustrious of their kings. They erected altars, built shrines and exalted many of them. So Pilate investigates more carefully and precisely than he did at first who Christ is and where he came from. But Jesus, it says, did not answer him a word. He was probably reminding Pilate of his statement. What did he say to him? "Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice."[46] Since Pilate was an idolater, how could he listen to the voice of the Savior when he says that he is the truth and the child of the truth? How could he accept and honor the name of truth in any way, since he rejected it from the outset and said, "What is truth?"[47] because he still worshiped false gods and was buried in the darkness of their deception?

19:10 Pilate therefore said to him, "Do you refuse to speak to me? Do you not know that I have power to crucify you, and power to release you?"

Pilate thought that his silence was insane. Therefore, he waves his governing authority over Jesus like a wand, [71] and he thinks that this will be able to induce him by fear, even against his will, to offer a pointless defense. After all, he says that nothing can prevent him from pursuing whatever decision he wishes, whether he chooses to punish him or perhaps to have mercy on him. Since there is no one to force him to make a judgment he does not wish, the outcome for the accused rests with him and him alone. He rebukes him, therefore, feeling insulted by the inappropriate silence, and to that degree his anger is sharpened against him. He has no understanding of the mystery of the silence. You may observe even in this detail that what was foretold by the voice of the prophet is beautifully fulfilled. "He was led like a sheep to the slaughter," he says, "and like a lamb before its shearers is silent, so he does not open his mouth. In his humiliation his judgment was taken away."[48] This is what the blessed Isaiah told us. The psalmist assumes the person of Christ and says somewhere in the Spirit, "I set a guard on my mouth as long as the sinner is in my presence. I was dumb, and I humbled myself, and I kept silence from good words."[49] You should understand "good words" to stand for "curses." The divine Scripture has the convention of speaking euphemistically of such matters when reference is made to the divine person.

19:11 Jesus answered him, "You would have no power over me unless it had been given you from above; therefore the one who handed me over to you is guilty of a greater sin."

He does not state clearly who he is or where he comes from or who his Father is. And in the same way he prohibits us from wasting the mystical message on the ears of foreigners when he says, "Do not give what is holy to dogs; and do not throw your pearls before

[46]Jn 18:37.
[47]Jn 18:38.
[48]Is 53:7-8.
[49]Ps 39:2-3 (Ps 38:2-3 LXX).

swine."[50] When Pilate parades before him his official authority and ignorantly professes that he can turn the verdict in any direction **[72]** as seems best to him and him alone, Jesus most profitably replies with his own power and authority and stops him short, as it were, as he was exalting himself against the glory of God by his vain and ignorant boasting. Indeed, it would have been no small calamity for any to suppose that Christ was dragged away against his will to suffer senseless insult and that he was overcome by the violence of the Jews, even though he is God by nature and is proclaimed king of all by the divinely inspired Holy Scriptures. Therefore, he removes for us the occasion for stumbling, and he pulls out this error by the roots, as it were, by saying, "unless it had been given you from above." He says that Pilate has been given power from above, not because God the Father imposed the suffering of the cross on his own offspring against his will but because the Only Begotten himself gave himself to suffer for us as the Father allowed the mystery to be accomplished in him. It is therefore the consent and agreement of the Father that is said to have been given here, as well as the will of the Son. After all, there is no doubt that the crowd could not have overcome the power of the Savior. It is easy to see this from the many plots they hatched that came to nothing but merely convicted and condemned them of insolence. For example, they wanted to seize him, as the Evangelist says, "but he passed through the midst of them and in this manner went on his way."[51] He says "in this manner" meaning that he was not cautious or afraid or implementing a plan of escape but walked without restraint, with his usual gait, free from all anxiety. He concealed himself by divine and ineffable power and eluded the gaze of those who were trying to kill him. He did not yet will to suffer, and **[73]** he did not grant to the wrath of his persecutors the ability to endanger him against his will. He says, then, that it was by his own will and the good pleasure of God the Father that power was given to Pilate to have any ability to do to him what he has already dared to do. The supreme divine nature is completely beyond the reach of all created beings and cannot be seized by them. It has by nature power over all things. He then ascribes the "greater sin," that is, the sin against himself, to the one who brought him to Pilate. And he was quite right to do so. That man was the source, as it were, and gate of the godless acts committed against Jesus, while the judge was merely a servant of the outrageous behavior of others as he made himself complicit in the unholiness of the Jews by his ill-timed cowardice. Who then is the traitor, and to whom does the charge of instigation apply? Surely it is the most venal disciple, or rather the traitor and destroyer of his own soul, and along with him the crowd of leaders and the Jewish people themselves. Though Christ ascribes greater godlessness to them, he does not completely excuse Pilate from blame.

19:12 From then on Pilate tried to release him, but the Jews cried out, "If you release this man, you are no friend of Caesar. Everyone who claims to be a king sets himself against Caesar."

Fear seizes Pilate and makes him more cautious. The outburst of the Jews makes him hesitate to put him to death. Previously, they cried out that "he has claimed to be the Son of God,"[52] and Pilate intended to deliver him from all danger and acquit him of all false charges since he was terribly afraid of this fact. But when the Israelites realize this, they return to their original **[74]** false charge and claim that Jesus swayed the people and transgressed

[50]Mt 7:6.
[51]Lk 4:30; cf. Jn 8:59.
[52]Jn 19:7.

against the rule of Caesar and fought against the reign of the Romans, as far as his power allowed. He "claimed to be a king," they say. Look at the pathetic and quick-tempered passion of those who make these false charges! First those miserable men cried out with one accord and asserted that he dared to challenge Caesar's rule. When that did not work very well, since Christ maintained that his kingdom was not an earthly one, they introduced before Pilate the charge of sinning against God himself—even though Pilate held a Roman office—saying, "He claimed to be God." The villains thought that they could thereby goad Pilate into reflexive anger and that he would forcefully resolve to sentence the Savior to death, making his passion for this a sign of his reverence for God. But when their evil plan proved fruitless, they returned to their original audacity and said that he dared to oppose Caesar's rule. They also cried out that the judge would absolutely be fighting against Caesar's glory as well unless he chose to defend it and impose an appropriate punishment on him who had spoken against Caesar, as they saw it, by accepting the title *king* in any sense. This despite the fact that Caesar did not claim a heavenly kingdom (of which, indeed, Christ is Lord) but an earthly kingdom below, which is rooted in Christ's power. By him kings reign, as it is written, and by him rulers rule the earth.[53] Those utterly unholy men do not guard their tongues; instead they shred the Savior's glory out of their excessive enmity toward God. The blessed prophet Isaiah is right to rebuke them when he says, "But as for you, **[75]** come here, you lawless sons and offspring of an adulterer and a whore. Whom are you mocking? Against whom do you stick out your tongue and open your mouth wide? Are you not children of destruction, a lawless seed?"[54] After all, it was not against just anyone that they made their outcry and stretched out their unbridled tongue and made every sort of false accusation but against their own Lord, who rules all things with the Father. Therefore, they are rightly called and truly are "children of destruction" and "a lawless seed."

19:13-14 When Pilate heard these words, he brought Jesus outside and sat on the judge's bench at a place called The Stone Pavement, or in Hebrew Gabbatha. Now it was the day of Preparation for the Passover; and it was about noon. He said to the Jews, "Here is your king!"

By saying this the Evangelist ascribes all the blame for murdering Christ to the Jews. Here he clearly says that Pilate was practically conquered against his will by their resistance so that he dismissed any thought of justice and paid no heed to the consequences. Because of this he was dragged down to the will of the murderers, even though he had often told them and clearly insisted to them that Jesus had been found guilty of nothing at all. This fact makes Pilate liable to the most extreme punishments as well. He subordinated his respect for justice to the will of the crowds and handed over him who was guilty of no crime to the frenzy of the Jews. He will therefore be caught incriminating himself in his own ungodliness. He then goes up to his usual judge's bench to pronounce the death sentence against Christ. The divinely inspired Evangelist profitably and appropriately indicates both **[76]** the hour and the day, because of the resurrection and his three days with those under the earth, to show that the Lord told the truth when he said to the Jews, "Just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the sea monster, so for three days and three nights the Son of Man will be in the heart of the earth."[55] On his judgment seat the Roman

[53]Prov 8:15-16.
[54]Is 57:3-4.
[55]Mt 12:40.

ruler pointed to Jesus and said, "Here is your king!" And what does he mean by this? He is either joking with the crowd and granting with laughter the innocent blood to those who thirsted for it unjustly, or perhaps he is reproaching the Jews and ridiculing them for their cruelty in that they so much as tolerate seeing him fall into such evils when they themselves name him the king of Israel.

19:15 They cried out, "Away with him! Away with him! Crucify him!" Pilate asked them, "Shall I crucify your king?"

They shout no less than before, and they do not back down from their lust for blood. They are not softened by the mockery, and neither are they moved to clemency by the outrages inflicted upon him; instead they are goaded to even greater fury and demand that he who raised the dead and worked such great miracles among them be crucified. Pilate is greatly distressed by the fact that they are saying that he who had obtained a glorious reputation among them—such a glorious reputation that he was thought to be the Son of God and a king!—not only ought to die but ought to die such a cruel death (since there is nothing worse than crucifixion). The judge therefore makes their outcry a sort of rebuke and reproach: they want him to be crucified who was admired for deeds so surpassingly excellent that [77] they transcend every deed on earth. What is equal to him? What does not fall short of the Son of God and the king?

The chief priests answered, "We have no king but Caesar."

Here the beloved Israel went astray and explicitly abandoned his love for God. As Moses said, he forsook the God who gave him birth[56] and "did not remember the Lord his helper."[57] Notice how he has the "face of a harlot," as it is written, and "refused to be ashamed."[58] He disowned his own glory and denied his own Lord. God accused them of this very thing when he spoke through the voice of Jeremiah of old, "Go to the isles of the Chettians; send to Kedar and learn whether the nations will change their gods, though they are not gods. But my people have exchanged their glory."[59] And again, "Heaven is amazed at this and shudders in horror, says the Lord. My people have committed two evils. They have abandoned me, the fountain of the water of life, and have hewn out for themselves broken cisterns, which cannot contain water."[60] While the other nations throughout the world held on to their error and were strongly devoted to those they deemed gods—since they had a mind that was not prone to falling away or readily changing to another form of worship—Israel turned away and devoted themselves to Caesar's rule and rejected the reign of God. Therefore, it was entirely just that they were given over into Caesar's hands. At first they welcomed his authority, but then they were brought to ruin and their land was taken away. They endured the sufferings of war and its irreparable calamities.[61]

[78] Observe once again the precision of the writer here. He did not say that the people led such an ungodly response; their leaders did. "The chief priests cried out," he says, everywhere pointing out that by submissively obeying their leaders, the people were carried over the cliff and fell into the pit of destruction. The chief priests are blamed not only for destroying their own souls but also for being the leaders and officials who occasioned this ruinous bloodlust in the people under their control, just as the prophet surely blamed them when he

[56]Deut 32:18.

[57]Is 17:10.
[58]Jer 3:3.
[59]Jer 2:10-11.
[60]Jer 2:12-13.
[61]A reference to the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70.

cried out, "You have been a snare for the watchtower and a net stretched out in Tabor, which the hunters have set up."[62] In this passage he refers to the multitude under their control as a "watchtower." They were arrayed, so to speak, to observe the conduct of their leaders and to shape their own conduct accordingly. That is why the leaders of the people are called "watchmen" in the Holy Scriptures. The chief priests, then, are a snare and a net for the watchtower. They both initiated the denial and persuaded all the others to say, "We have no king but Caesar." Those miserable people dare to say this despite the fact that God the Father foretold to them the arrival of the Savior through the voice of the prophet, crying out, "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Proclaim it, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king comes to you, righteous and having salvation. He is humble and riding on a donkey and a young colt."[63] These people who once brought Jesus into Jerusalem riding on the foal of a donkey, who with one voice together with the infants crowned him with superhuman praises—for they said, "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord"[64]—now cry out against him, placing themselves solely under Roman rule and removing their neck, as it were, from the yoke of God's reign. **[79]** This was clearly the meaning of the statement "We have no king but Caesar." We will find that even then, however, the people praised Christ the Savior, but we maintain that this audacious outcry came from the malice of the chief priests, along with other exclamations that came from them.

19:16 Then he handed him over to them to be crucified.

Pilate against his will grants free course to the burning anger of the Jews for them to do whatever they want, even against the law. He cedes his authority as judge and allows them to be carried by their uncontrolled passion with impunity. He permits them to crucify him who was convicted of no crime at all but was condemned without basis merely because he said that he was the Son of God.[65] One should therefore ascribe the entirety of the audacious deed to the Jews. I think that one could rightly and reasonably charge them with being the prime movers of the act because the godless actions against Christ originated with them. We maintain, however, that Pilate is not without a share of their unholiness; he is complicit in their actions since he could have rescued him and saved him from the madness of the murderers. Not only did he fail to do so, but he actually handed him over. And he did not simply hand him over, but he handed him over that they might crucify him.

19:16-18 So they took Jesus; and carrying the cross by himself, he went out to what is called The Place of the Skull, which in Hebrew is called Golgotha. There they crucified him, and with him two others, one on either side, with Jesus between them.

They now lead out the author of life to die. Even this, however, was done for our sakes. By the incomprehensible power and design of God, **[80]** his suffering accomplished an unexpected reversal. The passion of Christ set a snare, as it were, for the power of death, and the Lord's death was the source of renewal to incorruptibility and newness of life. Bearing on his shoulders the wood on which he was about to be crucified, he went out, condemned already and suffering the sentence of death, even though he was innocent. And he did it for us. He took upon himself the punishment that the law justly assigns to sinners. He became "a curse for us," as it is written, "for cursed is

[62]Hos 5:1-2.
[63]Zech 9:9.
[64]Mt 21:9.
[65]Jn 19:7.

everyone," it says, "who hangs on a tree."[66] We are all cursed because we cannot fulfill the divine law. "We all sin much,"[67] and human nature is very prone to sin. Since the divine law said somewhere, "Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things written in the book of the law, to do them,"[68] the curse applies to us and not to others. Those who are charged with the transgression of the law and who are very prone to stray from its decrees would be the ones who deserve punishment. So the one who knew no sin was cursed for us in order to rescue us from the ancient curse. God, who is over all, was sufficient to suffer this on behalf of all and to purchase redemption for all through the death of his own flesh.

Christ, then, does not bear a cross of his own deserving but one that we deserved and that hung over us as far as the condemnation of the law is concerned. Just as he died not for himself but for us, that he might become for us the author of eternal life, destroying in himself the power of death; so also he takes upon himself the cross that we deserved, condemning in himself the condemnation of the law, that all lawlessness may shut its mouth, **[81]** as the psalmist says,[69] when he who has no sin is condemned for the sin of all. What Christ accomplished will be of great benefit to our souls (I mean as an example of courage in the service of God). I think there is no other way for us to arrive at perfection in virtue and complete union with God except to value love for him more than we value earthly life and to be willing and eager to risk ourselves for the truth if the occasion calls for it. Indeed, our Lord Jesus Christ says, "Whoever does not take up the cross and follow me is not worthy of me."[70] I think that "take up the cross" means nothing other than bidding farewell to the world for God's sake and placing our life in the flesh behind the hope of glory, if it should come to that. Our Lord Jesus Christ is not ashamed to bear the cross that we deserved. He suffers even this because of his love for us. But we, wretches that we are, whose mother is the insensate earth under our feet and who have been called into being from nothing, sometimes do not even venture to break a sweat in service to God. If suffering should occur because of reverence toward Christ, we immediately deem the shame to be unbearable, and we avoid the ridicule of our opponents or accusers as some kind of ruinous calamity, subordinating what pleases God to our paltry and fleeting love of glory. We grow sick with pride, the mother of all evils, so to speak, and we incur the blame that comes from that, since we think and act like slaves who are above their master and disciples who are above their teacher.[71] O what a terrible infirmity that lies hidden in our path and leads our mind astray from its fitting pursuit!

[82] We should also consider that the divinely inspired Peter could not bear the prophecy when Christ our Savior foretold the suffering of the cross. Christ said, "See, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be betrayed into the hands of sinners, and they will crucify him and put him to death."[72] But Peter did not yet understand the mystery of the *oikonomia*. Moved by piety, since he loved God and he loved his teacher, he said, "God forbid it, Lord! This must never happen to you."[73] And how did Christ respond? "Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; for you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things."[74] We can gather no small profit from this. We may learn that when the occasion calls for us to demonstrate courage in God's service and we

[66]Gal 3:13.
[67]Jas 3:2.
[68]Gal 3:10, Deut 27:26.
[69]Ps 107:42 (Ps 106:42 LXX).
[70]Mt 10:38.
[71]Mt 10:24.
[72]Mt 20:18; 26:45; 27:23.
[73]Mt 16:22.
[74]Mt 16:23.

must endure conflicts for the sake of virtue—yes, even if those who honor and love us the most try to prevent us from doing anything that brings about the establishment of virtue, perhaps by raising concern for our dishonor before others or by citing some worldly consideration—we must not yield. They are no different than Satan, who loves to put stumbling blocks in our way. Indeed, this is Satan's well-worn, customary procedure. He loves to use deception and sometimes smooth words to divert from their fitting pursuits those who are motivated by a God-loving disposition. I think Christ intends to show something like this when he says, "If your right eye causes you to stumble, tear it out and throw it away."[75] That which harms us is no longer our own, even if it is united to us by the bond of love, and even if nature grants it the right of relationship with us.

A pair of robbers was crucified with Christ, and the malice of the Jews contrived this as well. In order to show the Savior's death to be utterly disgraceful, as it were, they condemn the righteous one along with two lawbreakers. The two convicted criminals hanging next to Jesus could be a sign of **[83]** the two peoples about to be joined to him (I mean the Israelites and the Gentiles). And why is a convict the type of these peoples? The law showed the Jews to be convicts because they were guilty of transgressing it, and error showed the Greeks to be convicts because they worshiped creation rather than the creator.

In another sense those who are united with Christ are surely also crucified with him. They undergo the death, as it were, of their old behavior and are transformed to a new evangelical life. Paul said, "Those who belong to Christ have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires."[76] And again, speaking of all people in words describing himself, "For through the law I died to the law, so that I might live to God. I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me."[77] He also writes to certain people, "If you died to the world, why do you behave as though you live in the world?"[78] The death of worldly behavior raises us up to the beginnings of the behavior and life in Christ. Therefore, the crucifixion of the two robbers next to Christ signifies to us through that event the juxtaposition of the two peoples who are going to die, as it were, with Christ the Savior in the sense that they will bid farewell to worldly pleasures and no longer choose to live in a fleshly way, but instead they will live with their Lord in that they will live his way of life and devote their life to him. And the fact that the men hanging next to him were malefactors[79] does no harm to the meaning of the image. "For we were by nature children of wrath"[80] before faith in Christ, and we all deserved death, as we said in the beginning.

19:19 Pilate also had an inscription written and put on the cross. It read, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews."

This is surely the "record that stood against us," which **[84]** the divinely inspired Paul says the Lord nailed to his cross and led the rulers and authorities in triumph in it, that is, led them as vanquished and fallen from their rule. Even though the Savior himself did not fasten the inscription, but the coworker and servant of the madness of the Jews did it, it is ascribed to the one who allowed it to happen as if he did it himself. And he triumphed over rulers in it, since it lay open for all who chose to read it, pointing out him who suffered for us and gave his soul as a ransom for the life of all. All

[75]Mt 5:29.
[76]Gal 5:24.
[77]Gal 2:19-20.
[78]Col 2:20.
[79]Lk 23:32.
[80]Eph 2:3.

people on earth, since we have fallen into the nets of sin—"for all have gone astray, they are all alike useless," as it is written[81]—have become subject to the accusations of the devil. We were all living a gloomy and miserable life. The inscription contained a "record that stood against us"—the curse that the divine law imposes on transgressors and the sentence that went forth against those who went astray from that ancient command. It is like Adam's curse, which extended to the entire race in that everyone broke God's decrees. God was not angry only with Adam when he fell, but he was also angry with those after him who dishonored the decree of the creator. The law's condemnation of transgressors extended from one to all. We were therefore cursed and condemned by God's decree due to the transgression of Adam and to the transgression of the law laid down after him. But the Savior wiped out the record against us, nailing the inscription to his cross, which clearly signifies his death on a tree, which he underwent for the life of those who were condemned. He paid our penalty for us. **[85]** Even though he who suffered was only one, he was above all creation as God and worth more than the life of all. That is why, as the psalmist says, "all lawlessness stopped its mouth,"[82] and the tongue of sin is silenced, as it were, because it no longer has anything to say against sinners. That is because we are justified, since Christ has paid our penalty. "By his stripes we are healed," as it is written.[83] Just as by the tree, the sin of our falling away was brought to completion, so also by the tree, our return to our original state was brought about along with the thrice-longed-for reception of heavenly blessings, as Christ recapitulated for us in himself the source of our disease, as it were.

19:20 Many of the Jews read this inscription, because the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city; and it was written in Hebrew, in Latin and in Greek.

One could say that it was quite well conceived by a certain divine and ineffable purpose that the inscription contained a triple title "in Hebrew, in Latin and in Greek." It clearly confessed the reign of our Savior in three of the best-known tongues, offering to the crucified one the first fruits, as it were, of the prophecy that was spoken concerning him. The most wise Daniel said somewhere, "To him was given honor and kingship, and all tribes and tongues will serve him."[84] Yes, and the most holy Paul writes to us, crying out, "Every knee will bend in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."[85] The inscription, then, was the true first fruits, as it were, of the confession of tongues, proclaiming Jesus to be king. In another way it was an accusation against the Jews' enmity toward God, practically **[86]** crying out explicitly to those who gathered to read it that they crucified their own king and Lord—those miserable people who gave no thought to love toward him and who fell into utter senselessness.

19:21-22 Then the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate, "Do not write, 'The King of the Jews,' but, 'This man said, I am King of the Jews.'" Pilate answered, "What I have written I have written."

The leaders of the Jews could not bear the message on the inscription, and they were filled with bitter jealousy. They deny Christ's kingship again and say that he did not truly reign, and neither was he ever accepted as king,

[81]Ps 14:3 (Ps 13:3 LXX).
[82]Ps 107:42 (Ps 106:42 LXX).
[83]Is 53:5.
[84]Dan 7:14.
[85]Phil 2:10-11.

but he just used that title. In their great ignorance they did not realize that truth by nature could never lie. And Christ is the truth. Therefore, he is in fact "King of the Jews" if he is proved to have given himself this title, as they themselves confirm with their own words. Pilate rejects their request to change the inscription, refusing to sully the Savior's glory completely, doubtless due to God's ineffable will. After all, Christ's reign is established and unimpeachable, even if the Jews do not like it and try to falsify the confession of his glory.

19:23-25 When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took his clothes and divided them into four parts, one for each soldier. They also took his tunic; now the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece from the top. So they said to one another, "Let us not tear it but cast lots for it to see who will get it." [87] This was to fulfill what the Scripture says, "They divided my clothes among themselves, and for my clothing they cast lots." And that is what the soldiers did.

The soldiers divided the Savior's clothes, thus showing a sign of their beastly ferocity and inhuman disposition. It is the custom of executioners to show no concern for the suffering of condemned criminals. Sometimes they carry out the sentence with unnecessary harshness and show masculine indifference in the face of the suffering and divide the clothing among themselves as if the lot fell to them by some appropriate and lawful means. They divide, then, the severed garment into four parts, while they preserve the one whole and uncut. They do not want to tear it in pieces and make it completely useless, so they cast lots to see who gets it. For Christ could not lie when he said through the voice of the psalmist, "They divide my clothes among themselves, and for my clothing they cast lots."[86] All this was announced beforehand for our benefit, so that we may know by comparing these words to the outcome of events that he is the one foretold to come for our sakes in our image and who is expected to die for the life of all. No one with any sense will think the Savior would, like the foolish Jews, "strain out the gnat"[87] (that is, foretell the insignificant, minute details of his passion so as to mention the division of his clothing) "but swallow a camel" (that is, think it not worth mentioning the great and surpassing audacity of their godlessness). Rather he foretold the latter along with the former. **[88]** First he wanted us to know that since he is God by nature, he was not ignorant of what was about to happen. In addition he wanted us to believe that he is truly the one foretold, being led to the knowledge of this truth by the many things fulfilled in him.

Next, since it is necessary to say something further in examination of the division of clothing—and this will do no harm at all but may perhaps profit the readers—I will discuss this. They tear the Savior's clothing into four parts, but they preserve the one tunic without tearing it. The ineffable wisdom of the Only Begotten arranged this, as it were, and through it gave a sign of the mystical *oikonomia*, by which the four parts of the world would be saved. The four quarters of the world divided, as it were, the holy garment of the Word, that is his body, which yet remained undivided. The Only Begotten is divided into small pieces for each person, sanctifying the soul and body of each one through his own flesh, but in everyone he is completely whole and undivided. Christ can in no way be divided, as Paul says.[88] The shadow of the law sketched for us this meaning of the mystery concerning him. It represented in type the taking of the lamb at the proper time—not the taking of one lamb for each person but rather one lamb for each

[86]Ps 22:18 (Ps 21:19 LXX).

[87]Mt 23:24.

[88]1 Cor 1:13.

household according to the number of the household.[89] Everyone was to join with their next-door neighbor. In this way the law commanded that the lamb be divided among many. But in order that the lamb may not seem completely divided, with its flesh being carried from house to house, **[89]** the law further decrees, "It shall be eaten in one house. You shall not take any of the flesh outside the house."[90] Observe how, as I just said, the Scripture has preserved in types and shadows the division among many who would be in each house, while it is also very careful that it not seem divided but be found perfectly and wholly one in all who partook of it, both divided and not divided. You should understand something like this to apply also to his clothing. It was divided into four parts, but the tunic remained undivided.

And it will do no harm to add the following. One may, if one so desires, take the seamless tunic that was woven from the top and in one's contemplation apply it to the holy body of Christ. That is because it came into being without any intercourse or coming together of a man and a woman, but its proper structure was woven from above by the activity and power of the Spirit. This view should be accepted. When interpretations do no damage to necessary teachings but are pregnant with what might perhaps bring profit, it would surely be ignorant of us to reject them. Instead we should praise them as the discoveries of an excellent mind.

19:25 Meanwhile, standing near the cross of Jesus were his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene.

The divinely inspired Evangelist mentions this too for our benefit, thereby showing that none of the holy words falls to the ground. So what do we say about this? I will tell you. He introduces the women standing at the cross, his mother and the others with her, clearly weeping. **[90]** The feminine gender is always prone to tears and very much inclined to lament, especially when there is abundant reason for shedding tears. What then induced the blessed Evangelist to go into such detail that he mentioned the women remaining by the cross? He intended to teach the following. The unexpected suffering that happened to the Lord probably caused even the Lord's mother to stumble, and the exceedingly bitter death on the cross displaced a little of her fitting reflection. On top of that the same effect was produced by the insults of the Jews and the soldiers who quickly came to the cross and ridiculed him who hung there and who had the audacity to divide his clothes in front of his mother. You should not doubt that she entertained considerations such as this: I gave birth to him who is mocked on the tree. Perhaps he was wrong when he said that he was the true Son of the almighty God. Maybe he was in error when he said, "I am the life."[91] How could he be crucified? How could he be ensnared in the nets of the murderers? How could he not overcome the schemes of his persecutors? He commanded Lazarus to return to life and struck all Judea with astonishment. Why does he not come down from the cross? It is probable that the woman, not understanding the mystery, slipped into such a train of thought. We would do well to keep in mind that the nature of these events was so terrible that it could overcome even a sober disposition. It is no wonder that a woman slipped into this. If Peter himself, the preeminent one of the holy disciples, stumbled when Christ spoke to him and taught him explicitly that he would be given over "into the hands of

[89]Ex 12:4.
[90]Ex 12:46.
[91]Jn 14:6.

sinners"[92] and endure the cross and death, so that he impulsively responded, "God forbid it, Lord! This must never happen to you";[93] why is it a surprise that **[91]** a woman's frail mind was plunged into weak thoughts? When we say these things, we are not guessing idly, as some may suppose, but we are led to suspect this by what is written about the Lord's mother. We recall that the righteous Simeon "took" the infant Lord "in his arms," as it is written,[94] gave thanks and said, "Lord, now you are dismissing your servant in peace, according to your word; for my eyes have seen your salvation."[95] And to the holy virgin he said, "This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed—and a sword will pierce your own soul too."[96] By "sword" he meant the sharp attack of suffering that would divide the woman's mind into strange thoughts.[97] Trials test the heart of those who suffer them and strip away their thoughts.

19:26-27 When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing beside her, he said to his mother, "Woman, here is your son." Then he said to the disciple, "Here is your mother." And from that hour the disciple took her into his own home.

He gave forethought to his mother, disregarding, as it were, the intensity of his own suffering. For he was impassible even as he was suffering.[98] He commits her to the beloved disciple (John, the author of the book) and commands him to take her home and consider her his mother. He enjoins her, in turn, to consider the genuine disciple to be none other than her true son, that is, as he fulfills and imitates the role of her natural son by his tenderness and compassion.

But surely Christ did not say this out of love for the flesh, did he, as some foolish people have thought? Away with this **[92]** folly! The only people who would fall into such foolishness are those whose brains are damaged by a stroke. What profitable result, then, did Christ accomplish by this? First we maintain that he wanted to underscore the teaching that is honored by the law. What did Moses' decree say? "Honor your father and your mother that it may be well with you."[99] He gave us this command not only exhorting us to obey, but he also threatened those who refused to do it with the ultimate punishment. He placed sin against one's fleshly parents on the same level, as it were, with sin against God. The law commanded that the blasphemer be subject to the sentence of death. It says, "Whoever names the name of the Lord shall be put to death."[100] It also imposed the same punishment on those who wield an uncontrolled, unbridled tongue against their parents. It says, "Whoever curses father or mother shall be put to death."[101] Since the lawgiver has decreed that we should give such honor to our parents, how could it not be fitting that such an illustrious command be confirmed by the decree of the Savior? And since the perfect form of every blessing and virtue proceeds first from him, why should this one not be on equal footing with the others? Surely honoring one's parents is a very precious kind of virtue. How, tell me, could we learn not to make light of love for them even when we are overwhelmed by

[92]Mt 26:45.
[93]Mt 16:22.
[94]Lk 2:28.
[95]Lk 2:29-30.
[96]Lk 2:34-35.
[97]Cf. Cyril's *In Zachariam* 13:7, *Commentary on the Twelve Prophets* (Pusey 2:506.14-15).
[98]For a discussion of Cyril's paradoxical language regarding Christ's suffering, see John J. O'Keefe, "Impassible Suffering? Divine Passion in Fifth Century Christology," *Theological Studies* 58 (1997): 39-60.
[99]Ex 20:12.
[100]Lev 24:16.
[101]Ex 21:17.

intolerable calamities, except by the example of Christ first of all, and through him? After all, the truly noble person is mindful of the holy commandments and refuses to be diverted from their proper pursuit, and this is an issue not in peaceful circumstances but in stormy and troubled circumstances.

In addition to what I have already said I also ask you: How could it not be right for the Lord to take thought for his mother when she had tripped on a stumbling block and her mind was in turmoil? Since he is true God and sees the emotions of the heart and knows what is in the depths of a person, how could he have been ignorant **[93]** of the thoughts that were troubling her at that time concerning his precious cross? Since he knew her thoughts, he commended her to the disciple, the finest of mystagogues, who could explain the depths of the mystery fully and adequately. He was truly wise and learned in the things of God who received her and took her away gladly to carry out every aspect of the Savior's will concerning her.

19:28-29 After this, when Jesus knew that all was now finished, he said (in order to fulfill the Scripture), "I am thirsty." A jar full of vinegar was standing there. So they put a sponge full of the vinegar on a branch of hyssop and held it to his mouth.

When the unholiness of the Jews had fully completed its godless treatment of Christ and nothing was left to perfect their unthinkable cruelty, the flesh in the end felt its natural craving; it was thirsty, parched by the various outrages. Pain is apt to produce thirst since it uses up moisture in the body with excessive inner heat, inflaming the inner organs of the sufferer with its fiery attacks. Now it would not have been difficult for the Word, who is almighty God, to keep this away from his flesh. But just as he willingly allowed himself to endure the other sufferings, he endured this one too by his own free choice. So he asked for a drink. But they were so pitiless and far removed from the love of God that instead of a drink to quench his thirst, they gave him something to aggravate it. They turned an act of love into an additional impiety. In granting his request, are they not **[94]** feigning the appearance of love? But the divinely inspired Scripture can never lie. Speaking in the person of Christ our Savior, it says of them, "They gave me gall to eat, and for my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink."[102]

Now the blessed Evangelist John says that they "put a sponge full of the vinegar on a branch of hyssop" and brought it to him. Luke, however, does not mention this at all but merely says that they brought vinegar.[103] Matthew and Mark say that they put the sponge on a reed.[104] Perhaps some may think that the holy Evangelists disagree with one another, but I think that no one in their right mind would allow that this is the case. Must we not rather search to find out how this godless act was committed? The divinely inspired Luke did not think that the way they brought it was worth mentioning, but he says without elaboration that the vinegar was brought to him when he was thirsty. There is no doubt that the Evangelists would not have disagreed with one another in such small and unimportant details when in the essential matters they are in complete agreement and harmony. What then is the difference between them? What kind of treatment should it receive? There is no doubt that there were many officers (I mean the soldiers) who were irreverent toward Christ and led him away to the cross. Most of the Jews participated in their cruelty. Some put a sponge on a reed, others put it on a branch called hyssop. (Hyssop is a kind of plant.) These wretched

[102]Ps 69:22 (Ps 68:22 LXX).
[103]Lk 23:36.
[104]Mt 27:48; Mk 15:36.

people then gave Jesus a drink and committed this act too against their own head. Without realizing it they made themselves unworthy of any mercy whatsoever, since they stripped themselves of every form of gentleness and compassion, **[95]** and with such inconceivable audacity they competed with each other in godlessness alone. That is why God spoke through the voice of the prophet Ezekiel to the mother of the Jews (that is, Jerusalem) and said, "As you have done, so it will be done to you; your repayment will be repaid on your own head."[105] Through the voice of Isaiah he said to the utterly lawless Israel, "Woe to the lawless! The evil deeds their hands have done will happen to them."[106] This too was committed against Christ along with all the other unholy and monstrous audacities that had already been done to him. Yet here too we will find a lesson for our benefit. By this we learn that an unceasing war, as it were, will be waged against those who have a God-loving disposition and who are rooted in love for Christ by those who have the opposite disposition, who to their last breath will not rid themselves of their mania but will fashion intense trials on every side and eagerly devise every means to hurt them. But just as the trouble did not cease, so also the extent of their courage will be limitless. Just as the terrible acts and the affliction of the trials did not let up, so also the blessedness of the saints will have no end. The grace of their glory will be and remain forever.

19:30 When Jesus had received the vinegar, he said, "It is finished." Then he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

When this indignity had been added to the rest, the Savior said, "It is finished," that is, the measure of the Jews' godlessness and their furious rage against him were completed. What had the Jews not already done? What extreme inhumanity had they not already practiced? What kind of outrage was omitted, and what extreme insult did they pass over? He was right, then, to say, "It is finished." Indeed, the hour now summoned him to preach to the spirits in Hades. **[96]** He visited them that he might be Lord of both the dead and the living. He entered death itself for us and endured this experience that is common to our nature (namely, death according to the flesh), even though as God he was life by nature, in order to despoil Hades and to return human nature to life. Thus he became the "first fruits of those who have fallen asleep,"[107] and the "firstborn from the dead,"[108] according to the Scriptures. Then he "bowed his head." This usually happens to the dying because the tautness of the flesh slackens when the spirit (or the soul), which holds the flesh together and maintains its tension, departs. That is why the Evangelist used this expression. And the statement "He gave up his spirit" does not lie outside our customary usage. That is how the common people say, "He was extinguished, and he died." Now it seems intentional and appropriate that the holy Evangelist did not simply say, "He died," but, "He gave up his spirit," that is, into the hands of God the Father, in accordance with his statement, "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit."[109] For us the meaning of these words lays a foundation and a beginning of good hope. I think that we should believe, and for good reason, that when the souls of the saints depart their earthly bodies, by the mercy and compassion of God they are practically placed into the hands, as it were, of the most loving Father. They do not, as some unbelievers have conjectured, haunt their tombs waiting for

[105]Obad 1:15.
[106]Is 3:11.
[107]1 Cor 15:20.
[108]Col 1:18.
[109]Lk 23:46.

funeral libations, and neither, like the souls of sinners, are they brought down to the place of limitless punishment, that is, Hades. Rather they hurry into the hands of the Father of all, and Christ our Savior opened up the way for us. He "gave up" his soul into the hands of his Father [**97**] so that we too, starting in and through his soul, may have the glorious hope, firmly established in this belief, that when we undergo the death of the flesh, we will be in the hands of God, and that is a far better condition than we had in the flesh. That is also why the wise Paul writes to us that it is better to "depart and be with Christ."[110]

And when he had breathed his last, the curtain of the temple was torn down the middle from top to bottom.[111]

The curtain in the temple was made of fine linen and was hung right in the middle of the temple, shrouding the inner part and making the inner tabernacle accessible, as it were, only to the high priest. People were not permitted to rush in at will with unwashed feet and casually view the Holy of Holies. Paul showed us that the division made by the curtain was absolutely necessary when he said in his writing to the Hebrews, "For a tent was constructed, the first one, which is called the Holy Place. Behind the second curtain was a tent called the Holy of Holies. In it stood the golden altar of incense and the ark of the covenant overlaid on all sides with gold, in which there were a golden urn holding the manna, the tablets of the covenant and Aaron's rod that budded."[112] "The priests go into the first tent," he says, "to carry out their ritual duties; but only the high priest goes into the second, and he but once a year, and not without taking the blood that he offers for himself and for the sins committed unintentionally by the people. By this the Holy Spirit indicates that the way into the sanctuary has not yet been disclosed as long as the first tent is still standing."[113] There is no doubt that a curtain was let down at the outer gates of the temple. [**98**] That is why he mentioned the first tent and called it the Holy Place. No one could claim that any part of the temple was not holy. That would be a lie, since it is all holy. After the first tent the middle curtain formed the second tent (I mean the inner one), the Holy of Holies.

But as the blessed Paul said, the Spirit was demonstrating to us in the form of types that the way that is more fitting for the saints had not yet been revealed, since the people were still kept out and the outer courtyard was still standing. The way of life given by Christ to those who are called by the Spirit to sanctification was not yet truly manifest. The mystery concerning him was not yet manifest, since the commandment of the letter was still in force. That is why the law put the Jews in the outer courtyard. The teaching of the law was a porch and vestibule, so to speak, of the teaching of the gospel and its way of life. The one exists in types; the other gazes at the truth. The first tent is holy, since "the law is holy, and the commandment is righteous and good."[114] But the inner tent is the Holy of Holies because, although those who partook in the righteousness of the law were holy, they become holier still by receiving faith (that is, faith in Christ) and by being anointed by the divine and Holy Spirit. The righteousness of faith, then, is greater than the righteousness of the law, and its sanctification is far richer. That is why the most wise Paul says that he gladly and most readily endured the loss of the righteousness of the law in order to gain Christ and be found "in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law but one that comes

[110]Phil 1:23.

[111]This passage is not actually in John. See Mt 27:51 and Mk 15:38.

[112]Heb 9:2-4.

[113]Heb 9:6-8.

[114]Rom 7:12.

through faith in Christ."[115] Some fell backward and were bewitched after running the race well. The Galatians were like this. After having righteousness by faith they returned to the commandments of the law and slipped back into the way of life that consists of types and the letter. To them Paul quite rightly testified, **[99]** "If you let yourselves be circumcised, Christ will be of no benefit to you. You who want to be justified by the law have cut yourselves off from Christ; you have fallen away from grace."[116]

But let us sum up the meaning of the passage in a beneficial and appropriate way. The curtain of the temple is torn from top to bottom. Thus God revealed, as it were, the Holy of Holies and made the inner tent accessible to those who believe in Christ. The knowledge of the divine mystery lies open to us, no longer shrouded by the coarseness of the letter of the law like some curtain, or veiled by the historical account, or walled off by the obscurity of types from the eyes of our mind; rather it lies open in the simplicity of faith and in just a few words. "For the word is near you," it says, "on your lips and in your heart (that is, the word of faith that we proclaim); that if you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For one believes with the heart and so is justified, and one confesses with the mouth and so is saved."[117] In these words we see the entire mystery of godliness. As long as Christ had not yet waged the battle for our life and undergone the death of the flesh, the "curtain" was still stretched out, since the power of the law's commandments still prevailed.

But when all the atrocities committed against Christ by the unholiness of the Jews were "finished," and he finally "breathed his last" for us (and it was Emmanuel who suffered this), it was then time to rip up that ancient, wide curtain, that is, the protection of the letter of the law, and lay bare the beauty of the truth to those who are sanctified by faith in Christ. The curtain is torn completely. (What else can "from top to bottom" mean?) Why? **[100]** It is because the saving proclamation contains no partial revelation, but it instills in us the perfect illumination of the divine mysteries. That is why the psalmist said somewhere to God in the person of his new people, "You have manifested to me your hidden and secret wisdom,"[118] and the divinely inspired Paul too writes to believers in Christ, "I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace that has been given you in Christ Jesus, for in every way you have been enriched in him, in all speech, in all wisdom and in all knowledge."[119] When the curtain was ripped not partially but through and through, this showed that the worshipers of the Savior were going to be enriched in all wisdom and in all knowledge and in all speech. They would receive knowledge of him without any trouble or obscurity. That is what "from top to bottom" means. And we maintain that this was the most fitting and appropriate time for the revelation of the divine mysteries, when the Savior laid down his life for us, since Israel had already rejected grace and completely departed from love for God by raging against him and enacting their wicked audacity. After all, we can see that they have no evil deeds left to commit, once we learn that they have brought the author of life down into death.

I think we have said enough about this, and our consideration of the divine meaning did not miss the mark. Next, since the divinely inspired Evangelist is very precise in his statement, "When he had breathed his last, the curtain of the temple was torn" (which amounts to a

[115]Phil 3:8-9.
[116]Gal 5:2, 4.
[117]Rom 10:8-10.
[118]Ps 51:6 (Ps 50:8 LXX).
[119]1 Cor 1:4-5.

designation of the time of the event as necessary for us to know), come, let us consider another point in addition to what we have already said—a point that has, it seems to me, no small beauty for us to ponder. This point will in no way be found to fall short of the benefit and grace that we need. **[101]** The following custom prevailed among the Jewish people and their leaders. Whenever they witnessed an act that offended against the decrees of the lawgiver or heard anything outrageous (I mean words of blasphemy), they tore their clothing and took on the appearance of mourners. By this they defended God, in a way. By considering such acts to be intolerable they passed judgment on the madness of the transgressors and acquitted themselves of any blame in the matter. For example, the Savior's disciples Paul and Barnabas, when certain people who did not yet believe thought that they were gods—"for they called Barnabas Zeus and Paul Hermes" and, together with the priests, they brought sacrifices and garlands and tried to honor them with sacrifices[120]—leaped down from the platform, because of the damage that would be done to the divine glory if sacrifices were offered to human beings, and "tore their garments," as it is written.[121] They fended off the ignorant attempt of the idolaters with fitting words. And when Christ our Savior was on trial before the Jewish leaders and was asked who he was and what his teaching was, he answered plainly, "Truly I tell you, from now on you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power and coming on the clouds of heaven."[122] In response Caiaphas leaped up out of his seat and tore his garments, saying, "He has blasphemed!"[123] So the divine temple itself followed, as it were, this custom that was prevalent among them, tearing its own curtain like a garment right when our Savior breathed his last. It was condemning the impiety of the Jews for blasphemy against him. This too was surely accomplished by divine action in order to show us the holy temple itself mourning for Israel. **[102]**

19:31 Since it was the Day of Preparation, the Jews did not want the bodies left on the cross during the sabbath, especially because that sabbath was a day of great solemnity. So they asked Pilate to have the legs of the crucified men broken and the bodies removed.

The blessed Evangelist does not say this to testify to the reverence of men accustomed to such brutal and savage bloodshed and found guilty of such unholy atrocities. Rather he is portraying them in their ignorance and stupidity, doing what Christ had said: they "strain out a gnat but swallow a camel."[124] That is because they give no thought to their exceedingly terrible acts of impiety, while they concern themselves with great care over the most insignificant details, behaving ignorantly in both cases. The proof is ready at hand. Look, look! Though they kill Christ, they show great reverence for the sabbath. Though they insult the lawgiver with unthinkable audacity, they make a show of their reverence for the law. Those who destroyed the Lord of the solemn day pretend to honor the great solemnity of that sabbath. And they ask for a favor that is perfectly suited to them. They ask that their legs might be broken to increase the pain of death, by this final intolerable outrage, for those who were already suffering.

19:32-37 Then the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and of the other who had been crucified with him. But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. Instead

[120]Acts 14:12-13.
[121]Acts 14:14.
[122]Mt 26:64.
[123]Mt 26:65.
[124]Mt 23:24.

one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once blood and water came out. (He who saw this has testified so that you also may believe. His testimony is true, [103] and he knows that he tells the truth.) These things occurred so that the Scripture might be fulfilled, "None of his bones shall be broken." And again another passage of Scripture says, "They will look on the one whom they have pierced."

The request of the Jews is carried out by men who are afflicted with a madness akin to the cruelty of the Jews (I mean Pilate's soldiers). They break the legs of the two robbers, since they are still among the living, intensifying the agony of their fatal punishment and forcing them to die by an even more grievous act of violence. But when they find Jesus with his head bowed and they realize that he had already expired, they think there is no point in breaking his legs. But since they have a little doubt about whether he was already dead, they pierce his side with a spear, and blood gushes out mixed with water. God presented us with this event as an image and first fruits, as it were, of the mystical blessing[125] and holy baptism. After all, holy baptism truly belongs to Christ and comes from Christ, and the power of the mystical blessing springs from his holy flesh.

The most wise Evangelist confirms for his hearers from these events that Christ was the one who was foretold long ago by the Holy Scriptures, since the events took place in accordance with what was written about him. Not a bone of his was broken, and he was pierced by the spear of the soldiers, in accordance with the Scriptures. He says that the disciple who testified to these things was a spectator, as it were, and a witness to the event, and that he truly knows that his testimony is true. By this he is referring to none other than himself. He refrains from stating this more openly so as to avoid the appearance of a love of glory, since that is an unholy thing and the ultimate affliction. **[104]**

Concerning the Request for the Body of the Lord

19:38 After these things, Joseph of Arimathea, who was a disciple of Jesus, though a secret one because of his fear of the Jews, asked Pilate to let him take away the body of Jesus. Pilate gave him permission; so he came and removed his body.

These words cry out with a loud voice against the unholiness of the Jews, showing that it is perilous and not without penalty to be a disciple of Christ. The passage clearly calls our attention to this fine young man (I mean Joseph), who was especially eager to avoid being noticed, even though he was convinced by the teachings of Christ to choose the true worship, which is better and more pleasing to God, who loves virtue, than the commandments of the law. At the same time he confirms what is necessary for our faith. We must—must—believe that Christ laid down his life for us. And when he was buried, how could it not follow as a sure and necessary consequence that he was dead? One may well condemn the extreme brutality of the Jews' pretense, unsympathetic disposition and heartless attitude, since they did not even grant to Christ the respect that is due the dead or honor him with burial rites when they saw him lying there as an inanimate corpse. This despite the fact that they knew that he was the Christ and they were often astounded at his miracles, even though their bitter envy did not allow them to derive any profit from it. It is a judgment against the inhumanity of the Jews, then, and a reproach to the residents of Jerusalem when the disciple from Arimathea comes and pays the honor of fitting service to

[125] I.e., the Eucharist.

him whom he had already honored by faith—though not yet openly but secretly "because of his fear of the Jews," as the blessed Evangelist says. **[105]**

19:39 Nicodemus, who had at first come to him by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, weighing about a hundred pounds.

He says that not just one disciple had sound intentions and came eagerly to dress the holy body for burial. To the first he adds a second as well (it was Nicodemus), thus gathering together the testimony to the event, as it were, that is valid according to the law. "Every matter shall be established by the mouth of two or three witnesses," it says.[126] There were two, therefore, who laid Jesus in the tomb: Joseph and Nicodemus. Inwardly they had faith in their heart, but they were still seized by a foolish fear and did not yet prefer honor and glory before God to that of the world. Otherwise they would have dismissed the fear of the Jews and paid no attention to their threats; they would have indulged their faith freely and without fear and shown themselves to be holy and good keepers of our Savior's commandments.

19:40-41 They took the body of Jesus and wrapped it with the spices in linen cloths, according to the burial custom of the Jews. Now there was a garden in the place where he was crucified, and in the garden there was a new tomb in which no one had ever been laid.

He was numbered among the dead who became dead for us according to the flesh, though we understand him to be (and he truly is) life of himself and because of his Father. In order to fulfill all righteousness (namely, the righteousness that applies to his human form) he subjected his temple of his own free will not only to death but also to what comes after it (I mean burial and being laid in a tomb). The author says that this tomb is in a "garden" and that it is "new." This fact signifies to us in a type and sketch that Christ's death is the source that grants us entrance into paradise. **[106]** He "entered as a forerunner on our behalf."[127] What else besides this could be signified by carrying the body of Jesus into the garden? And the newness of the tomb signifies the strange and untrodden path, as it were, of the return from death to life and the renewal that Christ devised to counter decay. Our death becomes new in the death of Christ, transformed into a kind of sleep with similar power and functions. Since we will live in the future, we are now "alive to God," according to the Scriptures.[128] That is why the blessed Paul everywhere refers to those who have died in Christ as "asleep." In ancient times the dreaded specter of death held sway over our nature. For death reigned "from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sins were not like the transgression of Adam."[129] And we have "borne the image of the man of dust,"[130] enduring death by the divine curse just like he did. When the second Adam appeared to us, the divine man from heaven, and contended for the life of all, he purchased the life of all by the death of his flesh. He destroyed the power of decay and returned to life again. We were then transformed into his image so that we experience a new kind of death, as it were—not one that dissolves us into decomposition forever but one that sends us a sleep that is full of good hope, just like the sleep of him who has renewed this path for us, that is, Christ.

If anyone wishes to assign an additional meaning to the statement that the tomb was

[126]Deut 19:15.

[127]Heb 6:20.
[128]Rom 6:11.
[129]Rom 5:14.
[130]1 Cor 15:49.

new and that no one had ever been laid in it before, this too would be fine. It says that the tomb is new and that no one had ever been laid in it so that no one else may be thought to have risen from the dead except for Jesus. **[107]**

19:42 And so, because it was the Jewish Day of Preparation, and the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there.

He not only says that the body was dressed for burial and that there was a garden near the cross and that there was a new tomb in it, but he also notes that Jesus was laid in it, omitting not even a small detail of what happened from the narrative. After all, the confession and knowledge of the death of Christ is absolutely essential for agreeing on and upholding the mystery. That is why the most wise Paul, when he defines for us the rule of faith, says, "The word is near you, on your lips and in your heart (that is, the word of faith that we proclaim); because if you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For one believes with the heart and so is justified, and one confesses with the mouth and so is saved."[131] And elsewhere he says, "For I handed on to you as of first importance what I in turn had received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures."[132] The author of the book, therefore, gives us an essential account of these events. We must—must—believe that he died and was buried. After that the true belief will follow that he burst the bonds of death and returned to his life as God. For "it was impossible for him to be held" by death.[133] Since he was life by nature, how could he have undergone decay? He is the one in whom "we live and move and have our being."[134] How could he have been subject to the laws of our nature? Would he not rather, as God, easily have supplied life to that which lacks life? **[108]**

20:1-9 Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the tomb. So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him." Then Peter and the other disciple set out and went toward the tomb. The two were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. He bent down to look in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he did not go in. Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen wrappings lying there, and the cloth that had been on Jesus' head, not lying with the linen wrappings but rolled up in a place by itself. Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; for as yet they did not understand the Scripture, that he must rise from the dead.

This devoted and God-loving woman would never have endured remaining at home, and neither would she have left the tomb, if she did not fear the sabbath law and the punishment imposed on transgressors. But she curbed the intensity of her zeal. Letting the ancient precepts now prevail, she resolved that her mind must not, even involuntarily, dwell on what she most desired. But when the sabbath is past and the next day dawns, she runs to the place. And when she sees the stone rolled away from the mouth of the tomb, she is

[131]Rom 10:8-10.
[132]1 Cor 15:3-4.
[133]Acts 2:24.
[134]Acts 17:28.

seized by a reasonable suspicion. She considers the unending envy of the Jews and thinks that Jesus has been carried away, ascribing this impiety to their madness along with the others. **[109]** While the woman is thinking about this and considering what probably happened, she returns to those who love the Lord, eager to make his closest disciples partners, as it were, in her search for him. Since her faith was established, as it were, and impregnable, she was not drawn aside to think less of Christ because of his suffering on the cross, but she calls him Lord, as she usually did, even when he is dead. That is truly a disposition of devotion to God. When those men heard the woman's news (I mean Peter and John, the author of the book—since he calls himself the "other disciple"), they ran as fast as they could and arrived quickly at the tomb and became eyewitnesses of the miracle. They were enough to be witnesses of the event, since they were two in number, in accordance with the law.[135] They have not yet met Christ, risen from the dead, but from the bundle of linen wrappings they infer the resurrection and at last believe that he has burst the very bonds of death, as the ancient Scriptures announced long ago. By understanding the occurrence of these events in light of true prophecies they obtain a faith with the most solid of foundations.

We must also note that the blessed Evangelist John mentions the time of the resurrection to us. He says, "Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb," while Matthew, indicating to us the same thing, says that the resurrection took place late at night.[136] Now I am sure no one thinks that the Spirit bearers disagree with one another, or that they are describing contradictory times for the resurrection. If any are willing to consider the meaning of their words, they will find that the voices of the saints agree on this point. It seems to me, after all, that early dawn and late night **[110]** convey the same meaning, which amounts to the midpoint, so to speak, of the night. There is therefore no discrepancy. One starts at the end of the night, the other at the beginning, and they arrive at an advanced hour and come together at the midpoint, as I just said.

20:10-11 Then the disciples returned to their homes. But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb.

The wise disciples, after gathering sufficient evidence for our Savior's resurrection, were full of firm and unshaken faith because of the outcome of events and the prophecy of the Holy Scriptures. They returned home and probably raced over to their fellow ministers to report the miracle to them and to consider the course they should pursue after this. But one would not go wrong to think that they had another reason for doing this. The anger of the Jews was now at a high point, and their leaders desperately wanted to kill everyone who marveled at our Savior's word and accepted his ineffable and God-befitting power and glory, especially the holy disciples. They understandably wanted to avoid falling victim to this, so they left the tomb before it was fully light, since it would not be possible for them to do this without danger if they were seen in the daytime, when the torch of the sun would reveal them to the eyes of all.

Now we would certainly not say that cowardice was the unmanly reason, as it were, that they undertook such a reasonable flight. Rather we should think that Christ implanted in the souls of the saints a knowledge of what is profitable and that he did not allow those who were going to become lights and teachers of the world to risk themselves prematurely. After all, **[111]** the words that he spoke to the Father in heaven concerning them had to be

[135]Deut 19:15.
[136]Mt 28:1.

shown true. "Holy Father," he says, "protect them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one, as we are one. While I was with them, I protected them in your name that you have given me. I guarded them, and not one of them was lost except the son of destruction."[137] The disciples therefore flee secretly, thinking that they ought to await the time when they could speak openly. In so doing they are obeying the Savior's words. For "he ordered them not to leave Jerusalem," as it is written, "but to wait there for the promise of the Father, which they heard from him: John baptized with water, but they will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."[138] And we will find that this did indeed come about in the days of the holy Pentecost, when "divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them."[139] That is when they were transformed into a ready and courageous disposition and, putting human weakness as far away from them as possible, they arrayed themselves against the madness of the Jews and thought that they should pay no attention to the plotting against them. The wise disciples, then, hid themselves for good reason, as I just said, while the Christ-loving Mary, being free from all fear and not suspecting the anger of the Jews, keeps watch persistently and experiences the natural female passion. She wails inconsolably and sheds unceasing tears from her eyes, not only grieving because the Lord was dead but also because she thinks that he has been taken from the tomb. [**112**]

20:11-13 As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb; and she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had been lying, one at the head and the other at the feet. They said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?"

Notice that the tears that are shed for Christ do not go unrewarded, and neither is it long before love for him bears fruit. Grace and rich requital will follow pain, since they are yoked together as neighbors, so to speak. Look! Look! As Mary sat there with her heart melted out of love for God, maintaining her genuine love for the Lord, the Savior granted her knowledge of the mystery concerning him through the voice of holy angels. She beheld angels in bright raiment, their garments signifying the perfect beauty of angelic purity. They interrupted her mourning and said, "Woman, why are you weeping?" It was not that they wanted to learn the reason for her shedding of tears. Indeed, they would have known it even if the woman had not told them, since the nature of the circumstances gave them more than enough information about it. Rather they were exhorting her to stop crying since this was not an appropriate moment for her to be overtaken by grief. After all, death was destroyed and decay lost its power now that Christ our Savior was raised for this purpose and opened a new way for the dead to return to life and incorruption. So why, O woman, they say, do you mistake the nature of the occasion? Why are you so bitterly distraught when the outcome of the events calls for the opposite? You should really rather rejoice and be glad. Why then are you weeping and in a sense detracting from the decorum that is due the festival?

They appear sitting at the head and at the feet where the body of Jesus had been lying, thereby in effect indicating [**113**] to the woman, who thought that the Lord had been taken away, that no one had harmed the holy body, since the angels and holy powers were attending it and surrounding the divine temple. And they knew their Lord. Now one might reasonably ask why the blessed angels said nothing to the holy disciples—indeed they

[137]Jn 17:11-12.
[138]Acts 1:4-5.
[139]Acts 2:3.

did not appear to them at all—but they appear to and speak to the woman. We reply that it was the intent of Christ the Savior to instill full assurance of his mystery in the souls of those who loved him, but he accomplished this in various ways, depending on the disposition of those being assured. For the holy disciples the outcome of events in agreement with the expectation of the divine Scriptures sufficed to assure them and implanted in them a faith that did not waver. They went home believing the Holy Scriptures, and it would have been superfluous for those who had such a firm faith also to be taught by the voice of the holy angels. But it was absolutely necessary for the woman, who did not know the divine and Holy Scripture and had no other way to know the deep mystery of the resurrection.

20:13-14 She said to them, "The have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him." When she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know that it was Jesus.

The woman, or rather the entire female gender, is slow to understand. She does not yet understand what her eyes see but rather announces the cause of her grief. But since she does not stop calling Christ "Lord," thereby demonstrating her love for him, it is right for her to enjoy the sight of what she longs for. She sees Jesus, even though she does not realize he is present. And **[114]** why is that? She was ignorant either because Christ our Savior hid himself by his divine power, not allowing himself to be easily recognized by the eyes of the beholder, or because it was still early dawn and she could not easily make out his appearance, since the night did not allow her to do this but barely revealed his outline as he came near. Indeed, our Lord Jesus Christ himself in the Song of Songs mentions walking in the night and the moisture of the morning dew, saying, "My head is wet with the dew, my locks with the drops of the night."[140]

20:15 Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you looking for?" Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away."

Since it is still dark and night has not yet completely dissipated, she barely sees Jesus next to her. She does not know who he is, since she cannot distinguish the image of his body and the features of his face. But she distinctly hears him say, "Woman, why are you weeping?" The Savior's words were truly gentle, but they were apt to form the impression that they belonged to one of the gardeners. It follows that the Lord said this not to find out the reason for her weeping or because he wanted to learn whom she was looking for, but rather because he wanted to stop her lamentation, just like the pair of blessed angels (since he was speaking in their presence). "Why," then, "woman, are you weeping?" he asks. "Whom are you looking for?" That is to say, stop crying; you have the one whom you are looking for. I, he says, am the occasion for your mourning, **[115]** namely because I died and suffered a dreadful fate, and on top of that I have now been taken away from the tomb. But since I am alive and I am here, stop your weeping and change it to joy. He asked the question, then, to end her mourning. The Lord must—must—be our restorer in this way also. Because of human nature's transgression in Adam, "Earth you are, and to earth you will return"[141] was spoken to the entire human nature in the first fruits of the race, and particularly to woman the sentence was pronounced, "In pain you will bear children."[142] Therefore, it was imposed on the woman to be

[140]Song 5:2.
[141]Gen 3:19.
[142]Gen 3:16.

rich in sorrow as a penalty. It was appropriate, then, that the weight of the ancient curse was taken away by the voice of the one who imposed it, when Christ our Savior took away the tears of the woman, or rather of the entire female gender, in Mary, the first fruits. She was the first of women to be sorrowful because of the Savior's suffering and to grieve over it and to be deemed worthy of the voice that stopped her crying. And the force of those words extend to the entire female gender, if indeed they are pained by the outrages against Christ and honor faith in him, in effect expressing the statement in the Psalms, "Do I not hate those who hate you, O Lord? Do I not loathe your enemies? I hate them with a perfect hatred; I count them my enemies."[143]

Now our Lord Jesus Christ says these things to free her from her grief, but she thinks that the speaker is one of the gardeners, and she promises very eagerly to transfer the remains of the Savior to another place, if only she were shown where he had laid him. Since she did not yet understand the great mystery of the resurrection, she was disturbed by suspicions of this kind. After all, **[116]** the female mind is slow-witted and ill-equipped to comprehend without trouble even matters that are not too difficult, much less miracles that are beyond comprehension.

20:16 Jesus said to her, "Mary!" She turned and said to him in Hebrew, "Rabbouni!" (which means Teacher). And she ran forward to touch him.

He invites the mind of the woman to a clearer understanding by placing himself in her sight without concealment (since she loved him dearly), and he almost rebukes her for taking so long to recognize that he is Christ. Calling her by name suggests something like this. She immediately understands, and the sight of him now shakes off her original suspicions. She addresses him with her usual term of honor, saying, "Rabbouni," that is, "Teacher." Her mind is filled with the highest joy, and she eagerly runs to him to touch his holy body and gain a blessing from it.

20:17 Jesus said to her, "Do not hold on to me, because I have not yet ascended to my Father."

The meaning of the statement is not easy for the many to see because there is a mystery hidden in it. Nevertheless we must examine it for the profit it offers. The Lord will grant us the understanding of his own words. He hinders the woman as she is running to him, and though she longs to embrace his feet, he does not allow it. He clarifies the reason for his action by saying, "I have not yet ascended to my Father." But we must investigate what we are to think this means. How could the fact that he has not yet **[117]** ascended to the Father in heaven constitute a sufficient reason for those who love him not to be able to touch his holy body? Would it not be blameworthy to think that the Lord said this to her to avoid the pollution of touch or to be pure when he ascended to the Father in heaven? How would that not be exposed as ignorant and altogether insane? The divine nature could never be polluted. Just as when the light of the sun's rays strikes dung or other earthly impurities, it suffers no harm—since it remains what it is, namely, undefiled, and does not partake in the foul odors of what it encounters—so also the divine and all-holy nature could never take on the filth of defilement. What then is the reason that Mary was prevented from touching his holy flesh when she ran to him and yearned to do so? What did the Lord mean when he said, "I have not yet ascended to the Father"? We must now investigate this as best we can. We maintain that there are many different purposes for our Savior's advent, but this one

[143]Ps 139:21-22 (Ps 138:21-22 LXX).

is the most important and is revealed by his own words: "I have come to call not the righteous but sinners to repentance."[144]

Before the saving cross and his resurrection from the dead, when his *oikonomia* for us had not yet reached its proper goal, he mingled with both the righteous and the unrighteous, and he ate with tax collectors and sinners. He gave free access to whomever wanted to touch his holy flesh so that he might sanctify and call everyone to the knowledge of the truth and bring back to health those who were sick and wasting away from the disease of sin. That is why he said to them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, **[118]** but those who are sick."[145] Therefore, before his resurrection from the dead, he mingled indiscriminately with the righteous and the sinners, and he drove away absolutely no one who approached him. For example, a woman once came to him weeping in the house of the Pharisees as he was reclining. She was a "sinner in the city," as it is written.[146] She let down her wanton locks, which were scarcely released from the service of her past sins, and wiped his feet, and he clearly did not prevent it. And when he was on his way to raise the daughter of the leader of the synagogue, a woman approached him who was "suffering from hemorrhages," and she "touched the hem of his clothes."[147] We find that he was not upset, but he considered her worthy of a word of blessing. "Daughter," he said, "your faith has made you well; go in peace."[148] At that time, according to the *oikonomia*, the impure and polluted in both body and mind could touch the holy flesh of Christ our Savior without hindrance and enjoy every blessing from it. But once he has fulfilled the *oikonomia* for us, and he has endured the cross itself and death on the cross and has come to life again and shown his nature to be stronger than death, then he prevents those who approach him and does not let them touch his holy flesh.

He does this as a type of the holy churches and of the mystery concerning himself, which the law given through the all-wise Moses also indicated to us when it represented the slaughtering of the lamb as an image of Christ. "No uncircumcised person shall eat of it," it says.[149] By "uncircumcised" it means "impure." And humanity, at least according to its own nature, could reasonably be understood to be impure. After all, what is human nature in comparison with the purity of God? Therefore, while we are still uncircumcised, that is, impure, we must not **[119]** touch the holy body, but rather we must be made pure by the circumcision that is by the Spirit. "Circumcision of the heart is by the Spirit," as Paul says.[150] But circumcision by the Spirit would not happen in us if the Holy Spirit did not dwell in us by faith and holy baptism. Surely it was fitting, then, that Mary was prevented from touching the holy body for a while, since she had not yet received the Spirit. Even though Christ had been raised from the dead, the Spirit had not yet been given to humanity from the Father through him. When he ascended to God the Father, he sent the Spirit to us. That is why he said, "It is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Paraclete will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you."[151] The Holy Spirit, then, had not yet been sent to us, since he had not yet ascended to the Father. So he prevents Mary because she had not yet received the Spirit, saying, "Do not hold on to me, because I have not yet ascended to the Father," that is, I have not yet sent the Holy Spirit to you. This is a type of the churches. Accordingly we keep from the holy table even those who

[144]Mt 9:13.
[145]Lk 5:31.
[146]Lk 7:37.
[147]Lk 8:43-44.
[148]Lk 8:48.
[149]Ex 12:48.
[150]Rom 2:29.
[151]Jn 16:7.

understand the divinity of Christ and have confessed their faith (that is, the catechumens) when they have not been enriched with the Holy Spirit. After all, he does not dwell in those who are not yet baptized. But once they are made participants in the Holy Spirit, nothing prevents them from touching Christ our Savior. That is why to those who wish to partake in the mystical blessing, the ministers of the divine mysteries announce, "The holy things to the holy people," teaching that participation in the holy things is appropriate for those who are sanctified by the Spirit. **[120]**

Chapter One

The Son is by nature God, even though he is found calling the Father his God on account of us.

20:17 But go to my brothers and say to them, "I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God."

For reasons that we have already explained, he does not allow Mary to touch his flesh, even though she intensely longs to do so because of her love for God. But he rewards her for being by his side, and he doubly repays her for her intense faith and love, showing that for those who have reverence for him, their reverence will not fail to bear fruit. And more glorious still, first in her (I mean Mary), the entire female race, so to speak, is crowned with double honor and delivered from their ancient frailties. First she mourned, with Christ as the reason for her tears, but she turned her grief into joy when she was told to stop crying by the one who in ancient times imposed the sentence that made women easily overcome by attacks of sorrow. It was said to the woman somewhere by God, "In pain you shall bring forth children."[152] But just as he subjected her to sorrows in paradise then, when she put herself in service to the words of the serpent and became a servant of the devil's evil works, so also once again in a garden he commands her to stop crying. Releasing her **[121]** from the curse that subjected her to sorrow, he bids her to become the first messenger of the great good tidings and to tell the disciples the good news of his journey to heaven. This was so that just as the first woman, who was the origin of all, was condemned for being a minister of the devil's words, and through her the entire female gender was condemned as well, so also she who served our Savior's words and announced the tidings that lead to eternal life might free the entire female gender from blame. So the Lord grants to Mary not only that she stop crying and no longer have a heart that is easily disposed to sorrow but also that she have beautiful feet. According to the voice of the prophet, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!"[153] though the first woman did not have beautiful feet, since she brought no good news when she advised our forefather to transgress the divine command. That Mary is worthy of admiration we may conclude from the fact that she was deemed worthy of mention in prophecy. What did it say about her and the women with her who brought the good news of the Savior's resurrection to the holy disciples? "Come here, you women who come from a spectacle; for it is a people of no understanding."[154] This divine prophecy practically commands these women, who truly love Christ, to come quickly to announce the events they had witnessed. It also condemns the Jews' lack of understanding, since they ridiculed the message of Christ our Savior's resurrection.

Although there are other women there (since it pleased the other Evangelists to record this), the wise John made mention only of Mary. But we will find that the words of the

[152]Gen 3:16.

[153]Rom 10:15; Is 52:7.

[154]Is 27:11 LXX.

saints do not contradict one another. It is likely that John only mentioned Mary Magdalene because she had the most intense impulse of love for Christ, **[122]** and she outran the others to see the tomb and be in the garden and look through every place around the tomb in search of his body, since she truly thought that the Lord had been taken away. Results are always ascribed to those who take the lead in thought and action, even though there might be others who participate in both.

Therefore, to her honor and glory and everlasting fame, the Savior granted to Mary that she proclaim the good news to the brothers that "I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God." You should accept this great and profound mystery and not allow your heart to leap over the rule of right divine doctrine. Do you hear how the only begotten Word of God became like us that we might become like him, as far as this is possible for our nature and as far as it pertains to our renewal by grace? He humbled himself that he might raise what is humble by nature to his own height; and he wore the form of a slave, even though he was by nature Lord and Son, that he might transfer what is a slave by nature into the glory of sonship, in conformity with his own likeness, like him. Since he became like us (that is, a human being) in order that we might become like him (I mean gods and sons), he receives our properties into himself and he gives us his own in return.

You may well want to ask how and in what way this takes place—and reasonably so. I will explain it as well as I can. First, though we are in the category of servants by nature (since creatures are servants of the creator), he calls us his brothers and he refers to God as the common Father of himself and us. Then, making humanity his own because of his likeness to us, he calls our God his God, even though he is Son by nature. **[123]** We ascend to honors above our nature by our likeness to him, for though we are not sons by nature, we are called sons of God, since he cries out in us through his own Spirit, "Abba! Father!"[155] In the same way he—since he has taken on our form in that he has become a human being according to the Scriptures—has God as his God, even though he is true God from God by nature. Therefore, do not be offended when you hear that he calls God his God, but rather examine this as one who is devoted to learning and consider wisely the precise wording. He says that God is his Father and our God, and both statements are true. By nature and in truth the God of all is the Father of Christ. When it comes to us, however, he is not our Father by nature, but rather our God, since he is creator and Lord. But since the Son has mixed himself with us, in a manner of speaking, he grants to our nature the honor that properly and strictly speaking belongs to him when he refers to his own Father as our common Father. Furthermore, he takes into himself what belongs to our nature on account of his likeness to us. He calls his own Father his God, since he was unwilling to dishonor his likeness to us due to his mercy and love for humanity. If you wish to accuse him ignorantly for this statement, and if it seems intolerable to you that the Lord should refer to God the Father as his God, you will foolishly find fault with the *oikonomia* that was accomplished for you. You will dishonor your benefactor for whom you ought to give thanks and foolishly slander the way he manifested his love for us. If he humbled himself, "disregarding the shame,"[156] and became human for you, then the charge of humiliation applies to you, sir, while exceptionally great admiration belongs to him who chose to suffer this for you. I am astonished **[124]** that you only pay attention to the emptying (since he did empty himself for us), but you do not consider the filling. You see the humiliation, but you do not recognize

[155]Rom 8:15.
[156]Heb 12:2.

the exaltation. After all, how was he emptied if you do not recognize him to be perfect as God? And how was he humbled if you do not take into account the exalted attributes of his ineffable nature? Therefore, though he was fully and completely perfect as God, he emptied himself for you and brought himself down to your likeness. Though he was exalted as the Son and was of the very substance of the Father, he humbled himself by becoming human and, as far as his nature allowed, became inferior to the exalted attributes of the divine glory. He is therefore God and man in the same person.[157] He is exalted because of his Father, since he is God from God and true Son from the Father. But he is humble because of us, since for our sakes he became human like us. Let your mind be at ease, then, when you hear him say, "I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God." It would be appropriate and quite reasonable for him to call his begetter his "Father," since he is God and Son by nature, and to call God his "God," since he is human like us.

20:18 Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples that she had seen the Lord and that he had said these things to her.

The race that is especially subject to frailty (I mean the race of women) is healed by our Savior's compassion, who recapitulates, so to speak, the source of our weakness and transforms it to a better state for the future. Mary announced that she saw the Lord, who had escaped the bonds of death, and that she heard his voice. She brings to the disciples the words of life and the first fruits of the divine gospel. **[125]**

20:19-20 When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." After he said this he showed them his hands and his side.

On the same day when he appeared to Mary and spoke with her, he also appeared to the holy disciples, who were terrified by the intolerable invective of the unholy Jews and so had gathered in a house. And it was likely that they who were so instructed were not without a sound reason for doing so, since they had often been commanded to be ready to escape the wrath of bloodthirsty men. He appears to them miraculously. When the "doors were locked," it says, Christ "stood among them" unexpectedly. By his divine, ineffable power he transcends the ordinary course of events and shows himself superior to the intentions and designs of those who did this.

Let no one say, "How did the Lord enter unhindered with his solid physical body when the doors were locked?" Rather one should realize that the divinely inspired Evangelist is not speaking of someone like us but of him who is enthroned with God the Father and who easily accomplishes whatever he wishes. He who is by nature true God could not—could not—be subject to the ordinary course of events, as the things created by him are, but he rules over necessity itself and over the fitting and appropriate intentions of each person's actions. How did he put the sea under his feet and walk through the waves as if on dry ground, even though our bodies cannot use water as a road beneath us? Or how did he accomplish the other miracles **[126]** by his God-befitting power? You will surely reply that these things are beyond comprehension. Then put this miracle in the same category as the others and do not think as some do, who are carried away by their superficiality to draw the wrong conclusions, that because of this event the Lord was not raised with his body but was

[157] ἐν ταὐτῷ. Literally "in the same." The Greek does not have "person."

stripped of the flesh and completely disconnected from the temple he assumed. If you cannot understand the activity of the ineffable nature, why do you not cry out against human weakness instead? I say that this would be the wiser course. In that case you would embrace in silence the limits set for you by the creator. But if you shake off, as it were, sober reasoning, you will disparage the great mystery of the resurrection, in which we have placed all our hope. Remember the exclamation of Paul: "If the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised. If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins."[158] And again, "We are even found to be misrepresenting God, because we testified of God that he raised Christ—whom he did not raise if it is true that the dead are not raised."[159] But what is raised except that which has fallen? And what rises again except that which is bowed down in death? And how can we "look for the resurrection"[160] if Christ did not raise his temple, as the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep, thus making himself the firstborn from the dead for us? Or how will "this perishable body put on imperishability"[161] if, as some think, it is going to descend into complete destruction? What will prevent this from happening to it if it has no hope of resurrection? Do not therefore corrupt the orthodox faith because of this miracle, but control yourself and count it with the other miracles.

Notice how by his miraculous entrance through locked doors he shows once again that he is God by **[127]** nature and that he is none other than the one who lived among them before. And by baring his side and showing them the nail prints he clearly confirms that he has raised the temple that hung upon the cross and the very body that he bore came to life again, destroying the death that belongs to the flesh, since he is by nature life and God. Why would he need to show them his hands and his side if, as some foolishly maintain, he was not raised with his own flesh? If he wanted the disciples to have some other understanding of him, why did he not appear to them in some other form instead? Why did he not lead them to some other understanding by disdaining the form of the flesh? As it is, however, he is so intent that they should believe in the resurrection of the flesh that even when the moment was right for him to transform his body into ineffable and supernatural glory, he decided in accordance with the *oikonomia* to appear as he was before, so that he might not be thought to have any other body than the one in which he suffered death on the cross. You may easily learn that our eyes could not have borne the glory of his holy body if Christ had chosen to reveal it, even before his ascension to the Father, if you consider the transfiguration that was displayed to the holy disciples on the mountain. The blessed Matthew the Evangelist writes that he once took "Peter and James and John and went up to the mountain. And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like lightning, and his clothes became white like snow."[162] But they could not bear the sight, and they fell to the ground. According to his wise plan, therefore, our Lord Jesus Christ did not yet transform his temple into the glory that was due and fitting for it **[128]** but still appeared in his original form. He did not want to transfer the faith in the resurrection to any other form or body than the one he assumed from the holy virgin, in which he was crucified and died, according to the Scriptures. That is because the power of death extends only to the flesh, from which it is also driven out. If his dead body did not rise, what kind of death has been conquered? How has the power of decay lost its force? Surely it is not by the death of a single rational creature or a soul or an angel or

[158]1 Cor 15:16-17.
[159]1 Cor 15:15.
[160]Cyril is quoting the Nicene Creed.
[161]1 Cor 15:53.
[162]Mt 17:1-2.

even the Word of God himself. Since death has power only over that which is naturally subject to decay, there is good reason to think that the power of the resurrection pertains to that as well, so that the power of the tyrant is destroyed. So the Lord's entry through locked doors will be classified among his other signs, at least by those with sober mind.

He also greets the holy disciples. "Peace be with you," he says, referring to himself as "peace." Wherever Christ is present, tranquility of spirit will surely follow. That is what Paul prayed God would grant those who believe in him when he said, "The peace of Christ, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your heart and mind."[163] By the peace of Christ beyond all understanding he is referring to none other than his Spirit. Anyone who participates in his Spirit will be filled with all good things.

Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord.

Here also the blessed Evangelist testifies to the truth of our Savior's words when he says that the disciples were filled with joy and gladness because they saw Jesus. We recall that he wove together an enigmatic statement for them concerning the precious cross and his resurrection from the dead. "A little while," he said, "and you will no longer see me, and **[129]** again a little while, and you will see me, and your heart will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you."[164] The Jews, whose minds were completely full of madness, rejoiced when they saw Jesus nailed to the cross, but the heart of the holy disciples was weighed down by sheer and unbearable sadness. Since he is life by nature, however, he destroyed the power of death and rose to life again. The joy of the Jews was extinguished, and the lamentation of the holy apostles was turned to joy.[165] Gladness bloomed that could not be lost or taken away. Christ will not die again, since he died once "to remove sin," as it is written.[166] Since he lives and exists always, it is clear that he will preserve the unending joy of those who hope in him. Then he greets them again, using his customary words, that is, "Peace be with you."

In so doing he is laying down a law, as it were, on this point for the children of the church. That is why in the holy gatherings, or synaxes, we say this to one another at the beginning of the mystery. After all, being at peace with one another and with God should be understood to be the fountain, as it were, and beginning of every good thing. That is why Paul too, when he prays that the highest of blessings be granted to those who are called, says, "Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ."[167] He also exhorts those who do not yet believe to have peace with God. He says, "We are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God."[168] And the prophet Isaiah exhorts us no less when he cries out, "Let us make peace with him. Let us who come make peace."[169] The meaning of this statement is fitting for the arbiter of peace, or rather for the peace of all people, that is, Christ. "For he is our peace," according to the Scriptures.[170] **[130]**

20:21 And he said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you."

With these words our Lord Jesus Christ appointed them to be leaders and teachers of

[163]Phil 4:7.
[164]Jn 16:16, 22.
[165]Cf. Ps 30:12 (Ps 29:12 LXX).
[166]Heb 9:26.
[167]Rom 1:7.
[168]2 Cor 5:20.
[169]Is 27:5-6.
[170]Eph 2:14.

the world and stewards of his divine mysteries. He now commands them to shine like lights and illuminate not only the land of Judea, which according to the measure of the divine commandment extends "from Dan to Beersheba," as it is written,[171] but every country under the sun and their inhabitants strewn everywhere. Paul is telling the truth, then, when he says that "no one takes this honor on himself, but only he who is called by God."[172] Our Lord Jesus Christ called his own disciples into the most glorious apostleship before all others. He firmly anchored the whole earth as it was practically shaking and falling, and he made those who were strong enough to support it into its props.[173] That is why, through the voice of the psalmist, he also said of the earth and the apostles that "I have strengthened its pillars."[174] After all, the blessed disciples became the pillars, as it were, and foundation of the truth.[175] He says that he sent them, just as the Father sent him, demonstrating at the same time the honor of apostleship and the incomparable glory of the authority given to them. At the same time he was probably hinting at the apostolic way of life they would lead. If he thought that he should send his own disciples in this way, just as the Father sent him, was it not necessary that they, who were going to become imitators of the same way of life, should see what the Father sent the Son to do?

Therefore, he explained the character of his apostleship to us in various ways. At one point he said, "I have come to call not the righteous **[131]** but sinners to repentance." And again, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick."[176] In addition, "I have come down from heaven not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me."[177] Again somewhere else, "God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world but in order that the world might be saved through him."[178] Summing up in a few words, then, the activities of apostleship, he says that he has sent them just as the Father sent him, so that they may know from this that they ought to call sinners to repentance, to heal those who are sick—both bodily and spiritually—and in all their actions to seek not their own will, but the will of him who sent them, to save the world, as far as possible, by their teaching. And in fact we will find that the holy disciples are eager to accomplish all these things. There will be no great difficulty in confirming this once we look at the book of Acts and the words of Saint Paul.

20:21-23 When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained."

After glorifying them with the great honor of apostleship and making them stewards and priests of the divine altar, as I just mentioned, he immediately sanctifies them by his own Spirit, whom he bestows by emphatically breathing into them so that we too may firmly believe that the Holy Spirit is not alien to the Son but is of the same substance with him and proceeds through him from the Father. He also shows that for those appointed by him to the divine apostleship, the gift of the Spirit necessarily follows. Why? They could not **[132]** do anything pleasing to God or overcome the snares of sin until they were "clothed with power from on high"[179] and transformed into something other than what they were.

[171]2 Sam 17:11 (2 Kings 17:11 LXX) and elsewhere.
[172]Heb 5:4.
[173]Cf. 1 Kings 10:12 (3 Kings 10:12 LXX).
[174]Ps 75:3 (Ps 74:4 LXX).
[175]Cf. 1 Tim 3:15.
[176]Lk 5:31.
[177]Jn 6:37.
[178]Jn 3:17.
[179]Lk 24:49.

That is why it was said to someone of old, "The Spirit of the Lord will come upon you, and you will be turned into another man."[180] The prophet Isaiah also declared to us that those who wait on God will "renew their strength."[181] And when the most wise Paul mentioned that he had surpassed some in his labors (that is, in his apostolic work), he immediately added, "Not I, but the grace of God that is with me."[182] In addition to this we also maintain that they would not have understood the mystery of Christ at all or become scrupulous leaders into this mystery if they had not progressed by the torch of the Spirit to the revelation of truths beyond comprehension and reason. That torch enabled them to ascend to teach what they needed to teach. For "no one can say that Jesus is Lord," as Paul says, "except by the Holy Spirit."[183] Since they were going to say that Jesus is Lord, that is, they were going to proclaim him as God and Lord, they had to receive the grace of the Spirit along with the honor of apostleship. And Christ gave the Spirit not as one serving the desire of another but rather as one supplying him of himself. After all, the Spirit could not come to us from the Father in any other way than through the Son. Therefore, the ancient letter of the law, which contains shadows and types of the truth, ordained that the appointment of priests should be done in a more bodily way, if I may put it like that, in coarse, visible actions. The blessed Moses, as God commanded him, ordered Aaron himself and the Levites to be washed with water.[184] Then he slaughtered the ram of consecration and **[133]** anointed the "lobe of his right ear with the blood," as it is written.[185] He also put some on the "thumb of his right hand and the big toe of his right foot," sketching out a type of the mystery of Christ like a picture. Here we have water and blood as the instruments of sanctification. How could there be any doubt that the beauty of the truth was being represented in types that were still unclear? Our Lord Jesus Christ transforms the outline of the law into the power of the truth when he consecrates through himself priests of the divine altar. In fact he himself is the ram of consecration. He consecrates through true sanctification, making them sharers of his nature through participation with the Spirit and strengthening, as it were, human nature to a power and glory that is superhuman.

Now there is no doubt that our explanation of these matters clearly does not stray from the truth at any point. But perhaps someone may come with the following question and inquire from a desire to learn: Where and when did the Savior's disciples receive the grace of the Spirit? When the Savior appeared to them at the house immediately after the resurrection, he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit." But in the days of the holy Pentecost, when they were gathered together in one place, "suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind; divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them; and they began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them utterance."[186] Either, one might say, we should think that the grace of the Spirit was given to them twice, or we will be ignorant of the time at which they truly became participants with the Holy Spirit—if indeed our Savior's word turns out to be true as well as what is written in Acts concerning the holy disciples. Well, this question may raise our doubts, **[134]** especially since Christ himself said somewhere, "It is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Paraclete will not come to you; but if I go, I will send

[180] 1 Sam 10:6 (1 Kings 10:6 LXX).
[181] Is 40:31.
[182] 1 Cor 15:10.
[183] 1 Cor 12:3.
[184] Lev 8:6.
[185] Lev 8:23.
[186] Acts 2:2-4.

him to you."[187] Perhaps the one asking the question will say, The truth, that is Christ, cannot lie. So when he explicitly declared that the Paraclete would not come to you if he was not taken up to the Father but he would surely send him when he was above at the Father's side, how is it that we find him giving the Spirit when he had not yet made his departure from here? Even though what we are investigating is quite obscure and the matter is difficult and likely to make us very uneasy, it has a very fitting solution when we believe that Christ is not like one of us but rather is God from God and exercises authority over his own words in accordance with the fitting *oikonomia* of his actions.

He promised to send the Paraclete down from heaven to us when he was above at God the Father's side. And he did this after he departed to the Father, and he granted the most abundant outpouring of the Spirit on those who wished to receive him. One would receive the Spirit by faith in Christ and by holy baptism. Then the statement of the prophet was fulfilled that said, "I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh."[188] However, it was necessary that the Son be seen to cooperate with the Father in giving the Spirit. And it was necessary that those who believe in him understand that he is the power of the Father, which created all things and brought humanity from nonexistence into existence. God the Father, through his own Word, took the original dirt from the ground, as it is written,[189] and fashioned a living creature (I mean the man), endowed him with a soul **[135]** according to his own will and enlightened him by participation in his Spirit. "For he breathed into his face the breath of life," as it is written.[190] And when it happened that he fell from obedience into death and humanity fell from that original honor, God the Father re-created it and brought it back to newness of life through the Son, just as in the beginning. How did the Son bring it back? By the death of his holy flesh he killed death and carried the human race back to incorruption. After all, Christ was raised for us. In order that we may learn that from the beginning he was the creator of our nature and that he was the one who sealed us with the Holy Spirit, the Savior once again grants us the Spirit as the first fruits of our renewed nature by distinctly breathing on the disciples. Moses writes of our creation of old that "he breathed into his face the breath of life."[191] Therefore, just as humanity was formed and came into being in the beginning, so also it is renewed. And just as then it was formed into the image of its creator, so also now it is refashioned by participation in the Spirit to the likeness of its maker. How can there be any doubt that the Spirit forms the image of Christ in the souls of those who receive him, when Paul clearly writes to those who through laziness have fallen back into the observance of the law, "My little children, for whom I am again in the pain of childbirth until Christ is formed in you"?[192] He is arguing, after all, that Christ is formed in them in no other way than by participation in the Holy Spirit and by living according to the evangelical law. Therefore, Christ restores his own Spirit in his disciples as the first fruits of a nature renewed to incorruption and glory and in the divine image. **[136]** In addition, we must—must—understand that he is the supplier and giver of the Spirit. That is why he said, "All that the Father has is mine."[193] The Father has his own Spirit from himself and in himself. The Son has this Spirit in himself as well, since he is of the same substance with the Father and comes from him essentially. By

[187]Jn 16:7.
[188]Joel 2:28.
[189]Gen 2:7.
[190]Gen 2:7.
[191]Gen 2:7.
[192]Gal 4:19.
[193]Jn 16:15.

nature he has in himself all things that belong to the one who begat him.

From the following we will demonstrate that although there were often many things he promised to do at their fitting time in the future, he nevertheless did them for our edification before the appointed time so that we might truly believe that what he said would surely take place. He promised to raise the dead and to bring back to life those who were lying in the ground and in tombs. "The hour is coming," he says, "when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and will come out—those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation."[194] And since he wanted to assure us that he could easily accomplish this, he taught us, saying, "I am the resurrection and the life."[195] But since the vastness of the miracle made it difficult to believe that the dead could ever be brought back to life, he does not wait for the time of the resurrection. He gives us a sign by raising Lazarus and the widow's son and Jairus's daughter. And what other examples are there? He says that the resurrection of the saints will be exceedingly glorious. "Then," he says, "the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father."[196] But here again, in order that he might be believed to speak the truth, he granted the disciples a vision of this ahead of time. "He took with him Peter and James and John and went up on the mountain, and he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like lightning, and his clothes became white like snow."[197] **[137]** Therefore, although he promises to do these things in their own time, he does them partially even before the right time as a kind of down payment on the primary act that is being awaited, which will apply to all, so that we may believe without doubt. In the same way, I think, although he said he would send us the Paraclete when he returned to the Father, and he defined that time as the moment when grace would come to all and upon all, nevertheless he brought about a kind of first fruits of his promise in the disciples for the many good and necessary reasons that we discussed before.

Therefore, they receive participation in the Holy Spirit when "he breathed on them," saying, "Receive the Holy Spirit." After all, Christ could not have been lying. He would not have said "receive" if he did not give. But in the days of holy Pentecost, when God made a clearer proclamation of grace and a clearer revelation of the Holy Spirit dwelling in them, tongues of fire appeared. They did not signify the beginning of the gift of the Spirit in them, but rather they referred to the beginning of the gift of languages. It is written that "they began to speak in other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."[198] Do you hear how it says that they began to speak, not that they began to be sanctified, and that the distribution of tongues came upon them as the Spirit, who was in them, brought this about? Just as the Father spoke from heaven to testify about his own offspring, saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased,"[199] and he did this for the edification of the hearers, sending down a voice (or causing it to occur) as a kind of instrument suited to our ears, so also he placed a visible proof of grace on the holy disciples by sending down on them tongues in the form of fire and by making the descent of the Spirit imitate the sound of a "rush of a violent wind."[200] **[138]** And you will readily understand that this too was given as a sign to the Jews when you hear God, the Lord of all, speaking through the voice of the prophet, "By strange tongues and by the lips of foreigners I

[194]Jn 5:25, 29.
[195]Jn 11:25.
[196]Mt 13:43.
[197]Lk 9:28; Mt 17:2.
[198]Acts 2:4.
[199]Mt 3:17; 17:5.
[200]Acts 2:2.

will speak to this people," and they will not believe.[201] Therefore, he sent down fire in the shape of tongues so that we might believe that the blessed disciples truly participate in the Holy Spirit, that they are crowned with grace given by Christ from above, that they are fit to expound the truth and that the glory of their apostleship is worthy of admiration since they are attested by the gift from on high.

I suppose that we have now said enough about this to give a precise explanation of the meaning of the passage. But since we must take every precaution in our explanation that no offense may spring up among the brothers because of the slander of some, come, let us add the following to what has been said and fend off the babbling that we expect will come from some quarters. We find that it is written in the next passage that "Thomas (who was called the Twin) was not with the disciples when Jesus came."[202] How then, one may ask with good justification, was he truly made a participant of the Holy Spirit, since he was absent when the Savior appeared to the disciples and breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit"? We reply that the power of the Spirit extended to everyone who received grace, and the Spirit fulfilled the intention of the one who gave him. And Christ gave the Spirit not to some but to all the disciples. Therefore, they receive the Spirit, even though some are not present, since the abundance of the giver is not limited to those who are present but extends to the entire chorus of the holy apostles.

I will confirm for you from the divine Scriptures themselves that our understanding of this passage is not forced and our explanation is not idiosyncratic. **[139]** I will cite passages from the books of Moses as proof. The Lord God once commanded the all-wise Moses to choose seventy elders from the assembly of the Jews, and he explicitly promised, "I will take some of the Spirit that is on you and put it on them."[203] So Moses brought them together and fulfilled the divine command. Just two, however, of the commanded number of seventy elders were left out and remained in the assembly: Eldad and Medad. Then God placed the divine Spirit on all of them, just as he promised, and those gathered together by Moses immediately received grace and began to prophesy. And the two who were still in the assembly began to prophesy as well. In fact the grace from above came upon them first. Joshua the son of Nun, who was the constant attendant of Moses, at first did not understand the meaning of the mystery. He thought that like Dathan and Abiram, they were rival prophets to those whom Moses had assembled. So he said to him, "Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp. My lord Moses, stop them."[204] And how did that truly wise and great man answer as he wisely recognized the activity of grace and the power of the Spirit that was given to them? "Are you jealous for my sake? Who else would give prophets to the Lord's people when it is the Lord who puts his Spirit on them?"[205] Do you see how he rebukes the words of Joshua, since he did not know what had been done? Would that the Spirit were given to all the people, he says, but that will happen at the proper time, when the Lord of all, that is, Christ, will grant his own Spirit to them by breathing on the holy apostles, as upon the first fruits of those who are due to receive the Spirit, **[140]** and saying, "Receive the Holy Spirit." Therefore, even though Thomas was left out he did not fail to receive the Spirit because the Spirit comes to all who are due to receive him and who are included in the number of the honored disciples.

[201]1 Cor 14:21; Is 28:11.
[202]Jn 20:24.
[203]Num 11:17.
[204]Num 11:27-28.
[205]Num 11:29.

As he gives the Spirit, Christ says, "If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained," even though only one who is by nature God has the power and authority to forgive sinners for their sins. After all, who could rightly grant pardon to others for their transgression of the divine law, except the one who gave that law? You may, if you wish, see the point of my statement from human affairs. Who has the authority to alter the decrees of earthly kings, and who tries to set aside the orders issued by the decree and will of the rulers except someone who is invested with royal honor and glory? Only such a person cannot be accused of breaking the law. Wise is the saying, "Whoever says to the king, 'You are a lawbreaker,' is insolent."[206] In what way, then, and in what sense did the Savior clothe his disciples with an honor that belongs to the divine nature alone? The Word, who is in the Father, could not miss the mark of what is fitting; he was quite right to do this. He thought it was fitting that they who already had the divine and royal Spirit within them also have the authority to forgive and retain the sins of whomever they want, since the Holy Spirit dwelling in them forgives and retains sins according to his own will, even though the deed may be accomplished through human beings.

The Spirit bearers forgive sins in two ways, at least as I understand it. They invite to baptism those to whom baptism is due because of the purity of their life and their tested **[141]** allegiance to the faith, while they hinder and exclude from divine grace those who are not yet worthy. Or another way they forgive and retain sins is that they rebuke the children of the church who are sinning and they forgive those who repent, just as Paul handed over the fornicator in Corinth "for the destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit might be saved"[207] and admitted him into fellowship once again "so that he might not be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow,"[208] as he says in his epistles. So when the Spirit of Christ who is in us performs actions that belong to God alone, how could the Spirit not be by nature God, since he is naturally invested with the glorious honor of the divine nature and has authority over the holy law?

20:24-25 But Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the Twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe."

The greatest marvels are always attended by unbelief, and whatever is done that surpasses the ordinary is not very easy for hearers to accept. But the sight of the miracle practically drives away doubt, as it drives a person by necessity and force, as it were, to admit it. The most wise Thomas experienced something like this. He does not readily accept the true testimony of the other disciples about our Savior's resurrection, even though the law of Moses said that every matter will be established by the mouth of two or three witnesses.[209] I think that the disciple did not so much disbelieve what was told him as much as he was driven to the depths of sorrow **[142]** because he was not counted worthy to see our Savior as well. Perhaps he thought he would miss out on this completely. After all, he knew that the Lord was life by nature and that he was not incapable of escaping death itself and destroying the power of decay. (He delivered others from it; how could he not deliver his own flesh?) His exceeding joy looks like

[206]Job 34:18.
[207]1 Cor 5:5.
[208]2 Cor 2:7.
[209]Deut 19:15.

unbelief. He practically leaps straight up and asks to see him right away and to be fully convinced that he rose again as he promised. "My children," said the Savior, "a little while, and you will no longer see me, and again a little while, and you will see me, and your heart will rejoice."[210] I think that the disciple's temporary lack of faith is very much in line with the *oikonomia*, so that by his assurance we too who come after him may believe without a doubt that through the Son the Father brought back to life the flesh that was nailed to the tree and suffered death. For this reason Paul too says, "If you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved."[211] Since the nature of the flesh did not become the supplier of life, but rather this was accomplished by the divine and ineffable nature, which has the ability to give life to all things, the Father acted through the Son upon that divine temple,[212] not because the Word was too weak to raise his own body but because whatever the Father does he does through the Son. The Son is his power, and whatever the Son accomplishes is surely accomplished by the Father. We are therefore taught by the blessed Thomas's slight lack of faith that the mystery of the resurrection is effected in our earthly bodies, and in Christ as the first fruits of our race. We are also taught that he was neither a phantom nor a shadow, as some maintain, **[143]** fashioned in a human shape and deceptively imitating the characteristics of our form. Nor was he, as others foolishly claim, a "spiritual body,"[213] that is, a body that is subtle and ethereal and something other than flesh. (That is how some understand the term *spiritual*.) Since the entire substance of our hope and the meaning of our irreproachable faith, after the confession of the holy and consubstantial Trinity, is directed to and focused on the mystery of the flesh, the blessed Evangelist very profitably included this incident at the end of the section. Observe how Thomas does not simply want to see the Lord, but he wants to see the "marks of the nails," that is, the wounds in his flesh. He quite rightly maintains that that is how he will believe and agree with the others that Christ has come back to life truly, that is, he has come back to life in the flesh. After all, that which has died is what one would reasonably understand to come back to life, and that which underwent death would surely be what undergoes resurrection.

20:26-27 After eight days his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe."

Once again he appeared miraculously to his disciples, as God. He did not order the doors to be opened for him so he could come in, as we would. No, he practically disregarded the way things normally work and came within the doors and appeared unexpectedly in the middle of the room, granting also to the blessed Thomas the same kind of miracle he performed before, it seems. He who suffered from a deficiency of faith especially needed—needed—the medicine. **[144]** He used the greeting that was so often on his lips, and he employed the blessing of peace as his solemn greeting as an example for us, as we have already explained. One might well be astonished at the minute detail here (I mean in this passage). The author of the book took such care with the details, and he was so eager to be scrupulous, that he did not simply say that Christ appeared to the holy disciples but that

[210]Jn 16:16, 22.
[211]Rom 10:9.
[212]I.e., the body of Christ.
[213]This term comes from 1 Cor 15:44.

he did so "after eight days" and that they were gathered together. After all, what else could it mean that they were all brought together in one house? Because of this admirable attention to detail, we maintain that by this Christ established for us the time of our coming together, or synaxis, on his account. He surely visits and in a sense dwells with those who are gathered on account of him, especially on the eighth day, that is, the Lord's day. Let us count it up, if you please. First he appeared to the other disciples. Then he appears to them again when Thomas is present. Now it is written a little before this that "it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors were locked, and he stood among them."[214] Note that he appeared to the gathered disciples on the first day of the week, that is, the Lord's day, and we see him appearing to them again no less on the eighth day after that. Now just because he says "after eight days," we should not assume he means the ninth day. When he says this, he is including the eighth day, on which he appeared, in that number.

We have an excellent reason, then, for holding our holy assemblies in the churches on the eighth day. And if I may speak more mystically, which is what these ideas demand, **[145]** we close the doors and Christ visits and appears to us all, both invisibly and visibly: invisibly as God and visibly in his body. He gives us his holy flesh and allows us to touch it. By the grace of God we approach to participate in the mystical blessing, and we receive Christ into our hands in order that we too may firmly believe that he has truly raised his own temple. It should be quite clear that communion in the mystical blessing is a confession of Christ's resurrection by what he said when he instituted the pattern of the mystery. He broke bread, as it is written, and gave it to them saying, "This is my body, which is given for you for the remission of sins. This do in remembrance of me."[215] Therefore, participation in the holy mysteries is a true confession and remembrance of the Lord's death and resurrection for us and on our behalf. By it we are filled with divine blessing. Let us therefore avoid doubt as a destructive thing, and after touching Christ let us be found completely faithful and full of firm conviction.

Now the attentive reader will recall that he prevented Mary Magdalene from touching him by saying explicitly, "Do not hold on to me, because I have not yet ascended to the Father."[216] He allows Thomas, on the other hand, to touch his side and feel the marks of the nails with his finger. The clear explanation of the reason for this has already been given; nevertheless I will mention it again, but I will keep it short. It was not yet time for her to touch him, since she had not yet been sanctified by the grace of the Spirit. Since Christ was still with us and had not yet ascended to the Father in heaven, it was impossible to see the descent of the Paraclete accomplished among human beings. **[146]** But this was proper for Thomas, since he had been enriched by the Spirit along with the others. As we have already explained, just because he was not present, that does not mean that he was without participation in the Spirit. The generosity of the giver extended to him as well, since the gift was given to the holy disciples as a whole.

I think that I should investigate the following as well. Thomas touched the Savior's side and found the wounds of the soldier's spear and saw the marks of the nails. How then, someone might ask, do these signs of decay appear in his incorruptible body? The holes that still remain and are preserved in his hands and side and the marks of the puncture wound made by the steel constitute evidence of physical decay, even though the true and

[214]Jn 20:19.

[215]Lk 22:19; Mt 26:28.

[216]Jn 20:17.

incontrovertible fact that his body was transformed to incorruption means that it must have been stripped of decay and everything that goes with it. If someone happens to be lame, will they rise again with a maimed foot or leg? And if anyone has lost their eyes in this life, will they be raised bereft of sight? How then, someone might say, have we shaken off decay if the damage from it is still preserved and rules over our bodies?

The answer to this question must be found, I think, and we give the following explanation of the difficulty at hand. We are eager to agree as much as we can that at the time of the resurrection no remnant of imported decay will be left in us, but as the wise Paul said concerning this body, what is sown "in weakness will be raised in power," and what is sown "in dishonor will be raised in glory."[217] What else could it mean to look forward to a resurrection of this body in "power" and "glory" **[147]** but that it will strip off all weakness and dishonor due to decay and suffering, and return to its original creation? After all, it was not created for death and decay. When Thomas made his request for clear confirmation, our Lord Jesus Christ appropriately left no pretext for lack of faith on our part, but he appeared just as Thomas asked to see him. Even when he ascended to heaven itself and made known his mystery to the powers above, to the rulers and authorities and to the commanders of the ranks of angels, he still appeared in this same form so that they might believe that the Word who is from the Father and in the Father truly became a human being for us, and they might see that he cared so much for his creatures that he died to give us life. And in order to make the meaning of my explanation clearer to the hearers I will add the words spoken by the voice of Isaiah on these matters. He says, "Who is this that comes from Edom, from Bozrah in garments stained crimson?"[218] Now those who shout this (I mean, "Who is this that comes from Edom?" that is, from the earth) are the angels and rational powers. They say it because they are marveling at the Lord as he ascends into the heavens. They see him practically dyed in his own blood, and they say, not yet understanding the mystery, "Why are your robes red, and your garments like theirs who tread the wine press?"[219] They compare the color of blood to new wine, recently pressed. And how does Christ reply to them? First, in order to show them that he is by nature true God, he says, "I speak righteousness,"[220] using the word *speak* instead of **[148]** *teach*. How could the one who teaches righteousness not be understood by all to be the lawgiver? And if he is the lawgiver, how is he not surely God as well? When Christ shows the angels too the marks of the nails, they then say to him, "What are these wounds in your hands?" And the Lord answers them, "The wounds I received in the house of my beloved."[221] After all, Israel was his beloved and wounded the Lord with nails and a spear, since the atrocities of the soldiers could reasonably be ascribed to the Jews. They were the ones who led the Lord to his suffering. So when Christ wanted to make the holy angels themselves certain that he had truly become a human being and that he had endured the cross for us and had been resurrected and had returned to life from the dead, he was not satisfied with mere words, but he showed them the signs of his suffering. What, then, is so astonishing or strange if, when he wanted to free the blessed Thomas of his unbelief, he showed him the nail marks and appeared contrary to expectation for the benefit of all, so that we might believe without a doubt that the mystery of the resurrection has been accomplished, since the body that

[217]1 Cor 15:43.

[218]Is 63:1.
[219]Is 63:2.
[220]Is 63:1.
[221]Zech 13:6.

was raised was none other than the one that suffered death?

20:28 Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!"

He who had just been slow to believe what he ought is now eager to confess it, and in a short time he is completely healed. After only eight days the hindrances to his weak faith were removed by Christ, who showed him the nail marks and his side. But perhaps someone will reply, Why, tell me, did the mind of the holy disciples carry out such a subtle **[149]** and precise investigation? Would not the sight of his body have been sufficient—the features of his face and the measure of his stature—for proof that the Lord was truly raised from the dead and recognized? What do we say to this? The mind of the divinely inspired disciples was not free from doubt even though they saw the Lord. They thought that he was not actually the one who used to accompany them and live with them and who hung on the tree but that he was a spirit, cunningly fashioned in the image of the Savior, simulating the form that they knew. However, they slipped into this way of thinking not without some occasion that reasonably suggested it to them. He miraculously entered through closed doors, even though a coarse earthly body requires a hole big enough for it and necessitates that the doors of houses correspond to its size. Therefore, it was quite beneficial for our Lord Jesus Christ to bare his side for Thomas and clearly display the wounds in his flesh, giving proof to them all through Thomas. Though Thomas alone is recorded as saying, "Unless I stretch out my hands and see the mark of the nails and put my hand in his side, I will not believe,"[222] the charge of a lack of faith was common to them all. We will find that the mind of the other disciples was not free from trouble, even though they said to Saint Thomas, "We have seen the Lord."[223] It is easy to see that this explanation does not depart from the truth by looking at what the divine Luke said concerning these matters. "While they were talking about this," he says, "he stood among them" (he being Christ) "and said to them, 'Peace be with you.' They were startled and terrified, and thought that they were seeing a ghost. He said **[150]** to them, 'Why are you frightened, and why do doubts arise in your heart? Look at my hands and my feet; see that it is I myself. Touch me and see; for a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have.' And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. While in their joy they were disbelieving and still wondering, he said to them, 'Have you anything here to eat?' They gave him a piece of broiled fish and a honeycomb, and he took it and ate in their presence."[224] Do you see how the thought of unbelief lurks not only in the blessed Thomas, but the mind of the other disciples is sick with this suffering as well? Look! Look! When he saw their little faith even after they beheld the wounds of the cross, he thought that he should convince them by another act that was not at all suited to a ghost but belonged properly to earthly bodies and to the nature of the flesh. So he ate the fish that was brought to him, or the piece of one. We will propose that each act was necessary, as it were. Corruption no longer applied to him after the resurrection of his holy flesh since he rose again to incorruption, and he did not require ordinary food as before. Nevertheless he showed the marks of the nails and did not refuse to partake of food so that he might root the great mystery of the resurrection and implant faith in it in the souls of us all. His actions are completely alien to the nature of spirits. The marks of the nails, the traces of wounds, the partaking of bodily food—how

[222]Jn 20:25.

[223]Jn 20:25.

[224]Lk 24:36-43.

and in what way could these belong to a naked spirit, unconnected with any flesh, since these things belong to the flesh according to the law of its nature and the condition in which it exists? Therefore, that none may think that the Lord was raised as a mere spirit or an intangible **[151]** body, shadowy and ethereal, which some are in the habit of calling "spiritual," but that they may believe that the same body that was "sown in corruption," as Paul says,[225] rose again, he displayed and performed acts that belong to a coarse body. What we said at first, however, that the blessed disciple disbelieved not so much because of the weakness of his mind but because of his excess of joy, will not stray from right thinking. We have heard the blessed Luke say of all the other disciples that "in their joy they were disbelieving and still wondering."[226] It was wonder therefore that made the disciples slow to believe. But since there was no longer an excuse for unbelief, since they saw him, the blessed Thomas accordingly made an utterly correct confession of him, saying, "My Lord and my God!" For anyone would agree that he who is Lord by nature and has power over all is truly God as well, just as power over all things obviously belongs exclusively to him who is God by nature, and the glory of lordship surrounds him.

We should also note that he says, "My Lord and my God"[227] in the singular and with the article. He does not simply say "a lord of mine and a god of mine," so that no one may think that he means "lord" and "god" in the sense that those terms are used of us or the holy angels. There are many "lords" and "gods" in heaven and on earth, as the wise Paul taught us.[228] But he recognizes him as the one Lord and God, properly speaking, begotten from the Father, who is Lord and God by nature, when he says, "My Lord and my God." And, what is an even greater confirmation of the truth, the Savior heard his disciples saying this, firmly believing that he was truly *the* Lord and God, and he did not think it necessary to rebuke him. **[152]** Christ, then, approved his faith, and for good reason. And you may quite readily see that this is true, because at the end of the Gospel, he says to the one so convinced and believing, "Go and make disciples of all nations."[229] If he commands one who thinks this way to teach all nations and appoints him to instruct the world in his mysteries, he wants us to have the same faith. Furthermore, he is truly Lord by nature and God, even after he became human. Note that the disciple offered his confession to him after touching his hands and feet and side. He did not divide Emmanuel into a pair of sons, but he recognized him as one and the same in the flesh. For there is "one Lord Jesus Christ," according to the Scriptures.[230]

20:29 Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe."

This saying of the Savior is perfectly arranged and can bring us the greatest profit. He gave limitless forethought to our souls in this point as well, since he is good and "desires everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth," as it is written.[231] That is the reason for the miracle. He needed to show his customary patience to Thomas, who said this, along with the other disciples, who thought that he was a spirit and an apparition, and to show them the marks of the nails and his pierced side—which he was very eager to do to provide proof for the world. And there was no

[225] 1 Cor 15:42.
[226] Lk 24:41.
[227] Ὁ Κύριός μου . . . καὶ ὁ θεός μου. Literally this means *"the* Lord of me and *the* God of me," which is why Cyril stresses the presence of the article.
[228] 1 Cor 8:5.
[229] Mt 28:19.
[230] 1 Cor 8:6.
[231] 1 Tim 2:4.

less a need for him to partake of food, contrary to his use and need, so that there may be no pretext at all that would lure to unbelief those who sought the benefits of his passion. Moreover, it was necessary for him to give our safety no small consideration. And on top of that he needed to have another goal in view: to make sure that nothing would easily drag future generations down into unbelief. **[153]** Indeed, it was likely that some would wander from the straight path and dismiss the faith, practicing a spurious kind of caution out of ignorance, and refuse to accept the resurrection of the dead. They would step forward like the doubting disciple and say to us, "Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands and put my hand in his side, I will not believe."[232] What kind of proof would have been sufficient for them, since Christ is no longer bodily on earth but has ascended into the heavens? And would they not have appeared right in saying this at times, since they would clearly be imitating the Savior's disciple in considering it noble not to believe too readily but to ask for definitive proof and to demand for themselves what was shown to the holy disciples? Christ therefore restrains any future descent into such thinking and keeps people from falling into it. As true God, he knew—he knew—the devil's evil intent and his deceptive devices. So he shows that the disciples who believe even without seeing are blessed, since they are truly worthy of admiration. Why? Undisputed faith is proper to those things that lie before our eyes because there is nothing to cause us to doubt. But if someone should accept what is not seen and believe as true what the words of a teacher of the mysteries delivers to the ears, that person has honored him who was preached with the most admirable faith. Blessedness will follow everyone who believes through the voice of the holy apostles, who were "eyewitnesses" of Christ's accomplishments and "servants of the word," as Luke says.[233] We must adhere to them if we desire eternal life and are eager to dwell in the mansions above. **[154]**

20:30-31 Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name.

In a way he is summarizing his book and making it clear to the hearers what the purpose of his gospel proclamation is. This book was composed, he says, "that you may come to believe, and that through believing you may have eternal life." He also says that the signs were many. He does not limit the accomplishments and miraculous activities of our Savior only to those that were known and reported by him, but he assigns, as it were, to the other Evangelists the task of adding whatever might occur to them from their accurate recollection, if they wish. Not all of them have been written in this book, he says, but I have included only those that would most likely have sufficient ability to convince the hearers that "Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God."

That is what the divinely inspired Evangelist says.

I, however, think that it would be profitable for me to add the following. If the entire force of what is written works this faith in us and convinces us with persuasive power to hold that he who was begotten of the holy virgin, who was called Jesus by the voice of the angel, is the same one who is proclaimed to be Christ by the divinely inspired Evangelist—and this same one and not another is not simply a son but is uniquely and properly the "Son of God"—then what excuse could they give and what judgment will they receive on that great day, who out of ignorance split up the faith

[232]Jn 20:25.

[233]Lk 1:2.

and then try to teach others to think that there are two christs? [155] They cut him up into a human being, properly speaking, and God the Word, properly speaking, even after the completely ineffable and incomprehensible union and coming together with the body. In so doing they err and wander far from the truth and "deny the Master who bought them."[234] If we examine the definition of his nature[235] when we form a conception of Christ, we find that the flesh is different from God the Word, who is from the Father and in the Father. But if we consider the meaning of the flesh's union with him, probing as far as possible this great and incomprehensible mystery, we realize that the Word is one entity[236] with his flesh without being changed into flesh. We do not say he was changed because the nature of the Word is unalterable and unchangeable and admits of no turning whatsoever. Rather we maintain, in accordance with our holy and divinely inspired Scriptures, that Jesus is one Christ and one Son, who is understood to be both from the divine temple, which contains the full definition of humanity, and from the living Word. Consider that this same thing is true for us as well and holds for our nature. We are combined into one human being from soul and body. The body is different from the soul in the body, according to the definition of each, but they come together to produce one animal. And they cannot be separated at all after they are united with each other.

21:1-6 After these things Jesus showed himself again to the disciples by the Sea of Tiberias; and he showed himself in this way. Gathered there together were Simon Peter, Thomas called the Twin, Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two others of his disciples. Simon Peter said to them, "I am going fishing." They said to him, "We will go [156] with you." They went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing. Just after daybreak Jesus stood on the beach; but the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to them, "Children, you do not have anything to eat, do you?" They answered him, "No." He said to them, "Cast the net to the right side of the boat, and you will find some." And they said, "We have toiled all night and have caught nothing, but at your name we will cast it."[237] So they cast it, and now they were not able to haul it in because there were so many fish.

Our Lord Jesus Christ lavishes upon his disciples the enjoyment of seeing him, which they greatly longed for, and he grants them a third visit, in addition to the earlier two, that their mind may be secure and unswervingly steadfast in their faith in him. Since they have now seen him not once but three times, how could they not have their mind released from all lack of faith and become competent instructors in the mysteries of the dogmas of godliness for all the others? Peter leaves to go fishing along with the others. They accompany him as he goes to do this, and perhaps Christ our Savior beneficially arranged these events. After all, when he placed the yoke of discipleship on them and called them to the honor of apostleship he said to them, "Follow me, and I will make you fish for people."[238] That he may prove to them in a coarse type that what he said will surely come about and that his promise

[234] 2 Pet 2:1.

[235] Cyril distinguishes between the Word and the flesh, but he uses the word *nature* in the singular to refer to Christ after the union, just as our human "nature" (singular) is composed of body and soul. Later he will advocate the formulation, "One nature of God the Word incarnate." The Council of Chalcedon (451) will define terms differently and prefer the formulation "two natures."

[236] Literally "one thing (ἕν τι) with his flesh."

[237] Here Cyril's text reflects a variant in the Greek text, similar to Luke 5:5.

[238] Mt 4:19.

will reach fulfillment in the power of the truth, he gives them clear evidence from the task they are engaged in. The blessed disciples were practicing their trade and were fishing. They "caught nothing," **[157]** even though they had toiled "all night." "Just after daybreak," when the sun had just begun to shed its rays of light, "Jesus stood on the beach." But they did not realize that it was he. And when he questioned them and asked whether they had in their nets anything to put on the table, they said that they had caught nothing at all. Then he commands them to let down their net on the "right side of the boat." And even though they labored all night in vain and to no profit, they say, "At your word"[239] we will let down the net. When they do it, the weight of the fish that are caught overpower the strength of those who are dragging them up.

That is what the divinely inspired Evangelist related to us. Now we have just said that the Savior truly gave the holy apostles proof, by this crystal-clear act and accomplishment, that they would fish for people just as he said. So come let us transform, as much as possible, what was done in type into the beautiful truth that it signified. Let us testify to the truth of the Savior's words. Let us unfold as best we can each event that happened and present to those who come upon these pages an opportunity for spiritual contemplation (and no mean one at that, I think). "Give opportunity to the wise, and they will become wiser still; teach the righteous and they will receive more instruction."[240] I think the fact that the disciples fished all night but caught absolutely nothing and spent their labor in vain signifies something like this: we will find no one—or at least very few—who was fully persuaded by the proclamation of the ancient teachers and who was captured in their net to do what is perfectly pleasing to God. That which is very small is tantamount to nothing, especially when it is taken from so many. Indeed, the people throughout the whole world are rightly thought to be very numerous. What then **[158]** hindered and got in the way so as to render the labor of the ancients vain? What made their proclamation fruitless, as it were? It was night and still dark, and an intellectual mist and a demonic deception settled over the eyes of their mind that did not permit them to see the true divine light. There was "no one who does good," as the psalmist says, "no, not one. All have turned away and together have become worthless."[241] Even though Israel had been caught, as it were, by Moses, it was as though they had not been caught at all. They practiced worship in types and shadows and had no instruction in the law that leads to perfection. We will find that worship in types is utterly useless, as it were, and contrary to God. This is easy to see from the fact that he rejects sacrifices of blood and every kind of earthly and bodily offering. "Why do you bring me frankincense from Saba," he says, "and cinnamon from a distant land? Your whole burnt offerings are not acceptable, and your sacrifices do not please me."[242]

We say this not to dishonor the first command that was given long ago or to accuse the law but rather to point out to the hearers that since God, the Lord of all, has regard only for the beauty of the gospel way of life, those who are caught in the net of the law to engage in profitless worship in shadows and types are no different than those who are not caught at all, until the "time of reformation"[243] dawns, since Christ explicitly says, after he became human, "I am the truth."[244] And if it is necessary to add a few words to this explanation, I will not shrink from doing so, because it

[239]In the lemma Cyril has "name," but uses "word" here. Both are reflected in the variant on this passage.
[240]Prov 9:9.
[241]Ps 14:1, 3 (Ps 13:1, 4 LXX).
[242]Jer 6:20.
[243]Heb 9:10.
[244]Jn 14:6.

is profitable. Those who were called by Moses to learn the law rejected the law that was given and practically laughed out loud at the holy commandment. They turned to the precepts of human teaching[245] and fell into such stubbornness and hardness of heart **[159]** that even the word of the holy prophets lost its power. That is why they cried out, "Lord, who has believed what we have heard?"[246] And Jeremiah says, "Woe is me, my mother, that you bore me, a man of strife and contention to the whole earth! I have not helped anyone, nor has anyone helped me, but my strength has failed me because of those who curse me."[247] How then could anyone refuse to grant that unbelieving and stubborn Israel was on a par with those who had not been caught at all, when they trampled on the law that was given through Moses? We should not need to prove that the multitude of the Gentiles were still uncaught and remained completely outside the net of divine teaching. Darkness and the devil's night filled their heart, driving out the light of the true knowledge of God. So "they worked all night," so to speak, but their spiritual nets were devoid of fish before the advent of Christ. But "just after daybreak," that is, when the devil's mist was dispersed and the true light (namely, Christ) arose, he asked the workers whether they had anything in their nets that would serve as food for God, who thirsts, as it were, for the salvation of all. (After all, the Scripture refers to the conversion of the Samaritans as his "food.")[248] When they answer his question with the clear admission that they have absolutely nothing, he commands them to let down "the net to the right side of the boat." The blessed Moses let down the net of instruction through the law and the letter. But he was fishing on the left side, as it were, while the commandment of Christ is understood to be on the right side. The instruction of Christ is incomparably greater and far superior to the commandments of the law, both in honor and glory, since the truth surely surpasses the types, the master surely surpasses the servant and **[160]** the justifying grace of the Spirit surpasses the letter that condemns. Christ's teaching therefore should be placed on the right side, since the "right side" signifies to us superiority over the Law and the Prophets.

The divinely inspired disciples obey our Savior's command without hesitation and let down the net. This shows us that they did not seize the grace of apostleship for themselves, but they went on their spiritual fishing trip at his command. "Go and make disciples of all nations," he says.[249] And they say that they are letting down the net at Christ's word. After all, the only way they catch fish is with the words of our Savior and the gospel commands. There was a great multitude of fish inside the net, so that the disciples could no longer easily pull it up. That is because those who were netted and believed are countless, and the miracle of it is obviously greater than and truly surpasses the strength of the holy apostles. It is the work of Christ, who gathers the multitude of the saved by his own power into the apostolic net, as it were, the church on earth.

21:7-14 That disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, "It is the Lord!" When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on some clothes, for he was naked, and jumped into the sea. But the other disciples came in the boat, dragging the net full of fish, for they were not far from the land, only about two hundred cubits. When they had gone ashore, they saw a charcoal fire there, with fish on it, and bread. Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish that you have just caught." So Simon Peter went aboard and

[245]Mt 15:9.
[246]Is 53:1.
[247]Jer 15:10.
[248]Jn 4:34.
[249]Mt 28:19.

[161] hauled the net ashore, full of large fish, a hundred fifty-three of them; and though there were so many, the net was not torn. Jesus said to them, "Come and have breakfast." Now none of the disciples dared to ask him, "Who are you?" because they knew it was the Lord. Jesus came and took the bread and gave it to them and did the same with the fish. This was now the third time that Jesus appeared to the disciples after he was raised from the dead.

Again in this passage the author of the book refers to himself as "the disciple whom Jesus loved." He is so loved, it seems, because of his great mental power, his purity of mind, the acuity of the eyes of his heart and his great capacity for ready comprehension. In fact he grasped the meaning of the sign before all the others. He realized that Christ was present and told the others without any hesitation, boldly announcing, "It is the Lord!" The divinely inspired Peter leaped into the sea, thinking that it would take too long to go by boat. He was always fervent in zeal and stirred up to boldness and love for Christ. The rest followed his lead, bringing the net along with the boat. Next they saw a "charcoal fire." Christ had miraculously lit a fire and placed a fish on it that had been caught by his ineffable power. This too was by his design, since it was not the hand of the holy apostles or the preaching of the spiritual fishers among us but the power of the Savior that began the work. First he netted one as a first fruit of those to come. (And we do not mean exactly one, but one signifies a very small number.) After that the disciples net a multitude when they are strengthened by his divine will so that they can catch what they are after. Peter pulls up the net, by which **[162]** we may understand that the labor of the holy apostles will not be in vain. They placed the multitude of caught fish before him who instructed them to fish, and the quantity of the fish is indicated by the number one hundred and fifty-three. The number one hundred, it seems to me, is best explained as signifying the fullness of the Gentiles. The number one hundred is the most perfect number, being composed of ten decads. That is why our Lord Jesus Christ himself says in one place that he has one hundred sheep,[250] thereby indicating that he possesses the full number of rational creatures. And in another place he says that the best soil will bear fruit one hundredfold,[251] referring to the holy soul's perfection in fruit bearing. The number fifty, on the other hand, is there to indicate the elect remnant of Israel, saved by grace. That is because fifty is half of one hundred and falls short of the perfect number. The number three, all by itself, can refer to the holy and consubstantial Trinity. The life of those who have been caught by faith is ascribed to and connected with the Trinity—to the Trinity's glory and eternal praise. God is in all believers, and he keeps those who have been persuaded by the gospel proclamation near to him by means of sanctification. After the nets were pulled up our Lord said to the holy disciples, "Come and have breakfast." He thereby teaches them that after their toil and sweat in calling people to salvation, they would recline with him, as the Savior himself says.[252] They would be with him forever, as an indescribable feast is set before them, that is, a divine and spiritual feast that surpasses our understanding. Christ further wishes to evoke the statement in the Psalms, "You shall eat the fruit of your labor."[253] **[163]** They do not take food for themselves and eat it, but Christ gives it to them. By this type, then, we may learn that at that time, Christ himself, as Lord, will bestow divine gifts upon us and distribute what will benefit us.

[250]Mt 18:12.
[251]Mt 13:8.
[252]Cf. Lk 13:29.
[253]Ps 128:2 (Ps 127:2 LXX).

21:15-17 When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon son of Jonah, do you love me more than these?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my lambs." A second time he said to him, "Simon son of Jonah, do you love me?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Tend my sheep." He said to him the third time, "Simon son of Jonah, do you love me?" Peter felt hurt because he said to him the third time, "Do you love me?" And he said to him, "Lord you know everything; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my sheep."

Peter set out to reach him before the others, refusing to go by boat, it seems, because of the incomparable fervor and zeal of his love for Christ. Therefore, he reaches the land first and hauls in the net. He was always an impulsive man, easily excited to zeal for action and speech. That is why he is the first to confess his faith when the Savior poses a question to them in the region of Caesarea Philippi, saying, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?"[254] The others respond, Some say Elijah, "others Jeremiah or one of the prophets."[255] But when Christ then asks, "Who do you say that I am?"[256] he leaps up before the others and becomes their spokesman and says, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."[257] Moreover, when the band of soldiers [**164**] came, together with the officers of the Jews, to take Jesus away to the rulers, all the rest "deserted him and fled," as it is written,[258] but Peter cut off Malchus's ear with a sword.[259] He thought that he ought to defend his teacher by any means necessary, even though his action was completely out of step with his teacher. Since he came more eagerly than the others, Christ poses the question to him of whether he loves him more than they do, and he asks it three times. Peter says yes and confesses his love, maintaining that Christ himself is a witness to his state of mind. After each confession he hears Christ urge him in different words to care for the rational sheep.

I, at least, think—since we must search out the hidden meaning in this passage—that these words were not written at random, but the statement is pregnant with meaning and the sense of the passage surely contains something hidden inside. Would it not be reasonable for someone to ask why he questions Simon alone, even though the other disciples were standing there? And what did he mean by "Feed my lambs" and the other similar statements? We reply that Peter was already appointed to the divine apostleship along with the other disciples, since our Lord Jesus Christ himself named them "apostles," according to the Scripture.[260] But when the events related to the plot of the Jews came about, Peter fell in the middle of it all. The divinely inspired Peter was seized by sheer terror and denied the Lord three times. Christ heals the one who had succumbed, and he elicits in various ways three confessions, which Peter makes as compensation, as it were, to counterbalance his error and set things right. Anyone would grant that a verbal transgression forms the basis of a merely verbal accusation against him, and it can be wiped out in the same way. [**165**] He asks him to say whether he loves him more than the others. Indeed, since he experienced more patience and received forgiveness of his transgressions with a more abundant hand, as it were, how could he not feel greater love than the others and repay his benefactor with extreme affection? All the disciples turned and

[254]Mt 16:13.
[255]Mt 16:14.
[256]Mt 16:15.
[257]Mt 16:16.
[258]Mt 26:56.
[259]Mt 26:51; Jn 18:10.
[260]Lk 6:13.

fled together since the inhumanity of the Jews instilled unbearable terror in them and the ferocity of the soldiers threatened them with a cruel death when they came to arrest Jesus. Peter's additional transgression, however (his threefold denial), was peculiar to him.

Since he received more forgiveness than the others, he is asked to say whether he also loves more than they. As the Savior says, the one who is forgiven much will also love much.[261] This is a type for the churches that they ought to ask for a threefold confession of Christ from those who have chosen to love him by coming to holy baptism. By contemplating this passage teachers will gain the knowledge that they cannot please the chief shepherd[262] of all, that is, Christ, unless they are concerned for the strength and well-being of the rational sheep.[263] That is how the divinely inspired Paul was. To the weak he became weak,[264] and he referred to those who came to believe through him, and who chose to gain repute through the glory of their deeds, as the boast of his apostleship and his "joy and crown."[265] He knew—he knew—that this was the visible fruit of perfect love for Christ. Anyone may perceive this through sound reasoning. If he died for us, how could he not consider the salvation and life of all to be worthy of his full concern? And **[166]** if those who "sin against their brothers and wound their conscience when it is weak" truly "sin against Christ,"[266] how could it not be true to say that people are showing reverence to the Lord himself when they lead by the hand the mind of new believers and those who anticipate being called to faith, and are eager to establish them firmly in the faith through any help they can give them? Therefore, by the triple confession of the blessed Peter, his transgression of denial, which also happened three times, was nullified. And we understand the Lord's statement, "Feed my lambs," to be a kind of renewal of the apostleship already given to him, which does away with the shame of his fall that happened in the meantime and erases his cowardice that stems from human weakness.

21:18-19 "Truly, truly I tell you, when you were younger, you used to fasten your own belt and to go wherever you wished. But when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands, and others will fasten a belt around you and take you where you do not wish to go." (He said this to indicate the kind of death by which he would glorify God.) After this he said to him, "Follow me."

With much grace and refinement, our Lord Jesus Christ testifies to the genuine love that his disciple has for him and the high honor of his extreme piety and endurance. He tells him clearly what his apostleship will lead to and how his life will end. He predicts that someone will take him to a place he does not wish to go, that is, the place where his persecutors, or those who condemned him to death, fixed him to a cross. He is saying that the place of the cross is the place where Peter does not wish to go. None of the saints suffers **[167]** voluntarily. But even though death is bitter and it comes upon them against their will, they nevertheless cling to the glory that comes from God and despise earthly life. So Christ predicted that the blessed Peter would be taken off to a miserable and hateful place of death. He would never have achieved this level of glory, and neither would he have been crucified for Christ, if he had not followed the charge to care for the rational sheep and if he had not, by the power of Christ rooted in him, called to faith those who went astray because they were entangled in the nets of the

[261]Lk 7:47.
[262]Cf. 1 Pet 5:4.
[263]The fact that Cyril here makes an application to the teachers of the church suggests that the commentary was addressed to catechists.
[264]1 Cor 9:22.
[265]Phil 4:1.
[266]1 Cor 8:12.

devil's deception. Those who dared to commit this crime killed the blessed Peter without being able to charge him with anything except reverence for Christ. One can see from this, then, that our Lord Jesus Christ's prediction of Peter's death was both profitable and necessary, so that by his impending suffering he might seal, as it were, and prove true what he said to Christ: "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." The fact that he died for proclaiming Christ—how could this not be clear and incontrovertible proof of his love, which shows that he did not fall short of perfect love (I mean love for Christ) in any way? Christ then adds to what he said to Peter the statement, "Follow me." This refers in its ordinary sense to following as a disciple. Enigmatically, however, it probably hints at nothing else than this: Follow my footsteps into danger, and walk on the same road, as it were, helping by your words and deeds the souls of those who are called. Do not hesitate at all to go to your death on the tree which, Christ says, will happen to you when you are old. **[168]** He did not allow terror to come upon him too early but delayed the attack of fear for a long time.

21:20-23 Peter turned and saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following them; he was the one who had reclined at Jesus' breast at the supper and had said, "Lord, who is it that is going to betray you?" When Peter saw him, he said to Jesus, "Lord, what about him?" Jesus said to him, "If it is my will that he remain until I come, what is that to you? Follow me!" So the rumor spread among the brothers that this disciple would not die. Yet Jesus did not say to him that he would not die but, "If it is my will that he remain until I come, what is that to you?"

The divinely inspired Evangelist refers to himself obscurely, but he still indicates who is meant. He is the one who is beloved and who reclined at Christ's breast during the supper and asked who would betray him. When Peter saw him, he tried to find out and wanted to learn what dangers he would face in the future and how his life would end. But his question seemed inappropriate. It was meddlesome and overly inquisitive of him, when he had received knowledge of his own future, to inquire about the future of others. I think that is the reason the Lord gave an answer that did not directly address what was being asked and sought. Rather he diverted the aim of the questioner to something else. He did not say that John would not die but, If I will that he live until I come, what is that to you? That is to say, You have heard, **[169]** Peter, about yourself. Why do you long to know about others and unearth the divine decree, as it were, before its time? If he never dies at all, he says, how will this console your heart? A wise and prudent person who is going to suffer will not care whether someone else is delivered from this or not. Their own suffering applies to them, but they will receive no comfort whatsoever from the misfortune or joy of someone else. The meaning of the passage is pregnant with some sense like this. Peter's statement about this implies that the blessed Peter anxiously desired to know what would happen to John—whether John would surely face the same peril or perhaps a different one—as a comfort to him in his own situation. Do not be surprised at this but rather understand it as follows. It is true for us as well, even though it is completely pointless, that we do not want to be the only ones suffering or about to undergo some horrible experience, but we want to hear that others have already suffered it or are going to suffer it.

21:24 This is the disciple who is testifying to these things and has written them, and we know that his testimony is true.

I think that none of the wise would doubt that the Lord would not have loved John if he had not been especially apt and illustrious in virtue, and practiced and perfectly equipped in

every good work. After all, God could never be caught inclining for no reason to those who are not worthy of his love. That malady most properly belongs to human beings. He is completely invulnerable to any assault and inroad of passion. He walks firmly in the path of every kind of **[170]** virtue, or rather he himself is every kind of virtue. So how could he not use judgment in this matter too and make his inclination free of all blame—I mean his inclination to love the one who is worthy of it? After this fine introduction saying that he is loved, he says in all simplicity and humility that he has "testified to these things," admirably and elegantly inviting the hearers to assent to what he has written and testified, as they must. After all, the preacher of the truth could not lie. That is why he also says, "We know that his testimony is true." It is dangerous, then, and truly terrible to lie at all, since people do not know how to bridle their tongues. And the truth would not have loved someone who violated the truth.

21:25 But there are also many other things that Jesus did; if every one of them were written down, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written. Amen.

The multitude of the divine signs, he says, is vast, and the catalog of his deeds is clearly innumerable. But these have been taken from many thousands since they are able to bring the most profit to the hearers. Let the one who is teachable and loves instruction not blame the author of the book, he says, if he did not record the rest. Indeed, if every individual accomplishment had been recorded with nothing left out, the immeasurable multitude of books would have filled the world. We maintain that, as it is, the power of the Word has accomplished more than enough. Anyone may see that thousands of miracles were accomplished by our Savior's power. The preachers of the Gospels, however, wrote down the more glorious ones, it seems, and the ones that could strengthen the hearers in an incorruptible faith and give them instruction **[171]** in morality and doctrine. That is so they might be glorious in the orthodox faith and adorned all over with works that aim at reverence. Then they might greet the heavenly city and be joined to the church of the firstborn and so enter the very kingdom of heaven in Christ, through whom and with whom be glory to God the Father with the Holy Spirit forever. Amen.

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PRAISE FOR ANCIENT CHRISTIAN TEXTS

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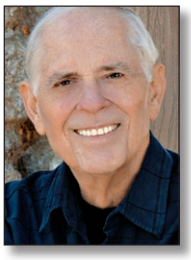

Thomas C. Oden, formerly the Henry Anson Buttz Professor of Theology at the Theological School, Drew University, Madison, New Jersey, is the general editor of the Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture. The author of numerous books, including a highly regarded three-volume systematic theology, he also serves as director of the Center for Early African Christianity.

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The Rev. David R. Maxwell (PhD, University of Notre Dame) is associate professor of systematic theology at Concordia Seminary in St. Louis, Missouri. His primary research interest is in the early church, particularly the christological controversies of the fourth through sixth centuries, and in patristic exegesis.

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The Rev. Dr. Joel C. Elowsky (PhD, Drew University) is associate professor of historical theology at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis. He has served as the operations manager for the Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture and has edited the two volumes on John's Gospel in that series. He is the volume editor for *We Believe in the Holy Spirit* in the Ancient Christian Doctrine series and has edited volumes on Theodore of Mopsuestia and Cyril of Alexandria in the Ancient Christian Texts series.

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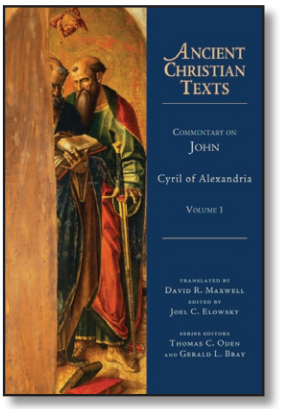

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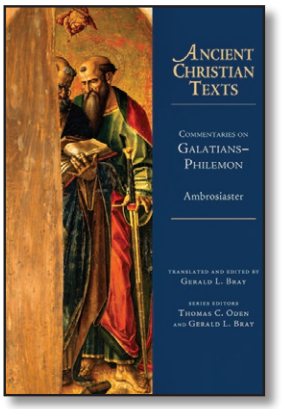

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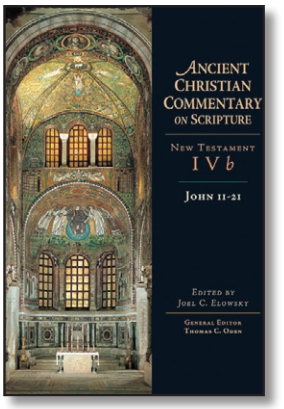

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